

Timing

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/9728897) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/9728897>.

Rating:	Not Rated
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Categories:	F/F , M/M , F/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter , Alana Bloom/Margot Verger , Alana Bloom/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham , Hannibal Lecter , Alana Bloom , Margot Verger , Bedelia Du Maurier , Jack Crawford , Mason Verger , Beverly Katz
Additional Tags:	AU , Alternative First Meeting , Slow Burn , Food , Cooking , Watches , Grumpy Will , snarky hannibal , Drunk Alana , Dancing Hannibal , Violence , Fluff , Fishing , Bottom Hannibal , Fresh Meat Friday , Abusive Relationships , so much cooking , Will has a language kink - who doesn't? , Phone Sex , A lot of phone sex , Wendigo , Will Graham Has Encephalitis , Angst , Ladies of Hannibal , Angst with a Happy Ending
Language:	English
Collections:	Fresh Meat Friday
Stats:	Published: 2017-02-15 Completed: 2017-05-31 Words: 89,002 Chapters: 15/15

Timing

by [purplesocrates](#)

Summary

Alternative first meeting. Hannibal is a horologist and jeweller, Will has a watch that won't keep time.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

Chapter 1

His shop if it could be called a shop was down a small dusty, hidden alley. It had no discernible name, no opening hours on display, it did have a big open front window but it had curtains which were always drawn. The only attempt at making it seem like a place of business was an antique light over the door which was usually off. A small sign was placed in the corner of the front window which had 'by appointment only' written in too fancy script on it. He didn't like visitors. Especially unscheduled ones.

He worked at a desk in the back, hidden by a thick red curtain which was always drawn. Even when he had customers they were not allowed in the back. He would set up one of the desks in the front with everything they had requested to see and nothing else. He was very particular it was something he prided himself on, attention to detail was vital in this line of work. It was all about the small things, small parts, small but exact, everything had its place the slightest misalignment would stop everything.

He was working on an antique pocket watch at the moment. He had found it at an antiques fare on the weekend, the seller had no idea what it was. Hannibal had seen the potential in it the moment his eyes found it in a box of random items. His eye had always been able to find diamonds in the rough, it was like a sixth sense for him. He prided himself on this ability and always took a smug sense of pride in seeing what others couldn't.

The Mozart playing from a refurbished gramophone was gently comforting in his work, it helped to focus the mind. He had taken the watch apart, piece by piece, he had laid the pieces all out on the soft cloth and inspected them. He had begun the painstaking task of cleaning each small mechanical element. He had collected the perfect tools over the years, it had taken time and patience to find his perfect toolkit. Some he had made or adapted himself and others he had hunted down with his usual painstaking ability for patience in lieu of reward.

He looked at the small cogs, wheels and screws and the face of the watch which was the classic roman numerals, black against a faded creamy white, decaying slightly at the edges though that added to its charm. The frame was dull but had potential to be bright again, he had perfected his recipe for cleaning various precious metals so that something that was hundreds of years old looked shinningly new. He prided himself in being able to make what was past look like new. The sense of satisfaction he got from his work was unparalleled in any other aspect of his life. As much as he enjoyed the company of others he also loved to indulge in the hours of solitude his employment allowed him.

He was quite popular amongst the elite, after all he restored their jewels and tracked down the rarest of watches. To have one of his creations or refurbishments not only meant you had money but that you had been allowed to wear something that not everyone had access to. He

would only entertain clients he deemed worthy to display his work. Those who appreciated its beauty, those who understood how much of himself he put into his work. It was about status, elite status. To be able to afford him you had to appreciate him.

This meant he was invited to many events, dinner parties and soirees. He was courted by the upper class, he never looked for work it wasn't work after all it was artistry. He was commissioned not hired. People hoped he would allow them access to his world, when they were it was a limited access. He was a very private person. He did not allow just anyone into his life. Not many were worthy by his standards of being interesting enough. He knew people talked and gossiped about him, trying to figure him out. He could count on one hand how many people really knew him. Even they were not allowed full access to him. He was an enigma and he liked it that way. He pretended to be shy and awkward when needed but he was above all elitist and judgemental of others. They never lived up to his expectations.

He was deep in thought studying the gold frame of the pocket watch, he had not heard the old bell above the door ring as the front door to the shop had been opened. He did not hear the call of 'hello' or the footsteps, or the door being carefully closed. He did however see the hand on the curtain as it was drawn back and the man stepped through. He did not remember having left the door open or the light on or having an appointment scheduled for today. All of these things ran across his mind but they did not show on his face as he carefully put the frame down and lowered his glasses to look at the man who had interrupted his work and made his way so easily into his private space.

"Sorry. I called out but..." His voice was soft and he was clearly not fond of eye contact despite his apparent boldness. He was of average height, brown curly hair, glasses which he hid behind, dress sense left much to be desired, plaid shirt and grey jacket, what looked like some kind of well-worn fishing jacket, grey slacks and old shoes. Not the type of customer Hannibal was used to having.

Hannibal got up and removed the needle from the record and turned around to face this intruder.

"Can I help you?" He moved towards him and got in his personal space so the man had no choice but to back out into the main space of the shop. Hannibal followed him making a show of pulling the curtain closed behind him. "Do you have an appointment?"

"No, sorry I don't. I am sorry if I was in a place I shouldn't be but as I said I did call out."

That was the worst apology Hannibal had ever heard, who was this rude impertinent man?

"Well this is an appointment only establishment I am afraid so you will have to call back."

He was still trying to usher this man to the door, he reached behind this man to open the door, he smelled like cheap aftershave and dogs.

“I’m sorry again but the door was open, you are acting like I broke in! You were recommended to me by a friend, she said you were the only one who could help me.”

He straightened up and faced this intruder. “I am sure whoever this mutual friend is they told you I only see people by appointment and that I am incredibly busy.”

“Yes, yes they did. But I was in the neighbourhood and I just thought I’d give it a shot that you were in and as I say the door was open.”

This man was insufferably rude and was not taking a hint. Hannibal sighed and took the bait. “Who is this mutual friend of ours?” Hannibal purposefully made eye contact to intimidate.

It seemed to work as the man took a step back. “Alana, Alana Bloom. My name is Will, Will Graham she may have mentioned me.”

Hannibal looked again at this man, this Will Graham, and narrowed his eyes. He was dishevelled, a person who did not spend much thought on clothes or appearance but seemed to have a keen eye for them nonetheless. Alana had mentioned him now that he thought about it, he was a profiler for the FBI, she had expressed an interest in the way his mind worked, she had explained his technique to him one night and he had to admit at the time he was intrigued. This person standing in front of him was not what he had imagined.

“The pendulum.” Hannibal said simply and Will looked up at him then, meeting his gaze with something akin to defiance in his eyes.

“Yes.” Will said simply.

“What is it I can help you with Mr Graham?”

He fished something out of his pocket, a watch an old one but nothing special, about fifty years old perhaps, a simple but elegant piece. He held out in his hand.

“I have never been able to get it to keep time. It used to keep perfect time. It was my fathers he left it to me after he died and ever since it has never kept time for longer than a few days. I have taken it to many different places and no one can find anything wrong with it, they fix it and then a few days later it stops again for no reason. Alana said you were an expert.” Will

said all of this slowly, trying to make his tone even so not to frighten Hannibal somehow, it all sounded vaguely patronising to Hannibal who would usually be getting more annoyed with this man but somehow found his hand reaching for the watch to take it from Will.

He turned it over in his hand feeling the weight of it, he held it up to his ear, it was ticking but erratically it was spluttering holding on to time with all its might, it was a sturdy piece.

“Hmmm it sounds erratic. Like something is stuck in its works.”

“Can you fix it?”

Hannibal looked at him, Alana had clearly not told him how much he normally charged. She was probably hoping he would take pity on him, though why she thought that he did not understand he was not prone to feeling sorry for others. Alana on the other hand was one of those people who had a big heart, she probably felt sorry for this mess of a human standing in his shop looking defiant for no reason.

“Probably. It’s a simple piece. I usually deal with a much more elite standard of pieces so this should not be too much of a challenge.” He purposefully held that eye contact, he enjoyed watching Will bristle under his exacting look.

“Well if it’s beneath you I can go elsewhere.” Will had taken offence and Hannibal had to admit it looked good on him, he smiled despite himself.

“No. Of course. A friend of Alana’s is a friend of mine. Let me take a look.” Will looked confused for a moment at the change of tack, Hannibal thought off putting also looked good on Will Graham.

He signalled for Will to take a seat and he went into the back room to take a closer look at the watch. It was silver, leather strap, yellowing face with slightly bluish numbers, dials in the centre for the date. Simple and practical, a classic working man’s watch. This was not the usual for Hannibal and he found he quite enjoyed the change. He carefully opened the back and checked the inside. He wound it again, tightened a few of the small screws and replaced a cog that looked slightly worn. He used the air canister to gently remove dust. He replaced the back and held it up to his ear, perfect. He smiled at the simplicity of the work.

He made his way back out to the main floor of the shop, Will had made himself comfortable sat in the chair with his head back he was gently snoring, his eyes flickered behind his eyes and his hands in his lap twitched, Hannibal noted the long neck and bobbing of the Adams apple and smiled. He coughed loudly to announce his presence.

Will startled. "Apologies, I haven't been sleeping."

"I have fixed it. It keeps perfect time now." Hannibal held out the watch to Will who gingerly took it and looked at it, he then held it up to his ear and smiled.

"That's amazing, it sounds great, like it used to. Yeah perfect time." He looked at the face.

"Thank you so much."

Hannibal found his open gratitude oddly touching.

Will stood up, digging in his pockets for his wallet, Hannibal held up his hand to stop him. "Please no charge. It was enjoyable to work on something so simple. As I said a friend of Alana's is a friend of mine."

Will stopped and actually purposefully made eye contact with him, which Hannibal felt a little unnerved by, and felt his stomach flip.

"Are you sure?"

"Of course. It was my pleasure. It shouldn't lose time again but if it does feel free to come by."

"Even if I don't have an appointment?" This gentle teasing would have made Hannibal blush if he had been one of those people who blushed, he instead just ducked his head.

"I will make an exception in your case." He honestly had no idea why he would do this. The thought of Will appearing in his shop again, however, was strangely appealing.

"Thank you." It was a simple but genuine response and Hannibal enjoyed it.

Will slipped the watch on his wrist, looking at it again on his wrist he smiled.

"My pleasure."

Will turned to leave, Hannibal reached to open the door for him and Will slipped out still

with a satisfied smile on his face. He gave one last look to Hannibal and then disappeared down the alleyway. Hannibal closed the door and locked it, sighing to himself at such an unexpected encounter. He noticed that something in the air had changed, a layer of noise usually there was not. Walking over to the seat where Mr Graham had been dozing he bent his head to the small wooden mantel clock that was on the table by the chair. It had stopped. He picked it up and re-wound it. Nothing. Strange. He took it with him to the back room, he would look at it later.

He put the Mozart on again and got back to his pocket watch, he could smell the lingering scent of Will Graham's aftershave long into the afternoon.

Alana was one of the few of his friends who had a longstanding, regular invitation to his house. Usually once a week she would come by for dinner. Hannibal enjoyed to cook and enjoyed Alana's easy company, she liked the distraction from work. She would always help him cook, chop something and they always found they fell into an easy rhythm with each other.

"So Will Graham came to see me."

Alana stopped chopping and looked at him with an apologetic look on her face. "I told him to call, I gave him your number."

He held up a hand, "no need to apologise, after all I left the door open. It was an interesting meeting though."

"He never really listens I told him you didn't like people to drop by." She paused. "What do you mean by interesting?" Hannibal rarely if ever described people as interesting, clocks, watches, time pieces yes but never people.

"I suppose he is just not the usual client or person I spend time with." He continued seasoning the beef.

"Well neither am I Hannibal. You have a lot of pretentious friends but you also spend a lot of time with me." She drank from her beer and eyed Hannibal as he tried to look nonchalant.

"You are an exception and have your own particular charms." He smiled as he said this and she threw her head back and laughed.

“Ever the charmer! He is unusual though I will give you that. His mind works in a particular way, it is fascinating.” It was Hannibal’s turn to raise an eyebrow. “I don’t mean that, I just mean he is interesting. As you say you don’t meet many interesting people.”

“He is a profiler?”

“Yes and he lectures though he doesn’t enjoy that aspect. Actually I’m not sure he enjoys any aspect of it.”

“What do you mean?”

“It’s hard for him, he finds it hard to look at violence and cruelty each day, to get into the minds of people who think like that it takes its toll. He has a very strong sense of empathy.”

“Why doesn’t he do something else?” He wasn’t judging just interested.

“I think he would find it harder to not look, in a way to know he could see things and put things together to find killers and not do it would weigh heavier on his conscious, he would feel more pain.”

“A martyr?”

“No, that’s too self-indulgent for Will, he is singularly unselfish.” Alana took another swig of beer.

“That’s a rare gift.”

“Yes. He was a cop before but he got stabbed so ended up using his gift for profiling serial killers.”

“He was stabbed.”

“Yes, in the shoulder. I met him just after he moved here from New Orleans.”

“How long has he lived here?”

“A few years now, he lives out in Wolf Trap, close to me, he has something of dog collection. He picks up strays, last count I think he had seven.” Hannibal was not surprised having picked a strong scent of dog earlier, also unsurprised at the self-enforced isolation. The empathy and lack of selfishness did intrigue him however. “Did you fix his father’s watch?”

“Hmmm, yes I did.” His thoughts were momentarily lost.

“Did you over-charge for his rudeness at dropping by unannounced?”

Hannibal laughed. “No actually I did not charge him at all, seeing as we had a mutual acquaintance it seemed rude, it was an easy fix.”

Alana smiled. “Most unlike you! He must have made an impression. I wouldn’t rest on your laurels just yet though, Will said it often gets fixed and then just stops working again for no reason. He might be back.” She winked at him and he pretended not to notice.

“I told him he may stop by should that occur.”

“Did you?!”

“I was merely extending a courtesy on behalf of my charming friend Alana.” He smiled a forced smile at her.

“Okay if you say so.” She smiled to herself and continued chopping.

A few weeks had passed since his encounter with Will. Alana had been busy at work had not been by in a while for dinner. He had been passing the time concentrating on fixing the pocket watch and trying to push the thoughts of Will Graham’s smile out of his head. He was in the back room again working, this time listening to some Beethoven when it happened again.

“Do you make a habit of leaving your door unlocked?” Will smiled at him and he found he was momentarily breathless at the sight of Will having appeared in his shop again. He was sure he had locked the door this time...

“Evidently.” He said standing and going to the record player to turn off the music. “You are obviously in the habit of coming through them.”

Will laughed and Hannibal found a surprising pleasure at being the cause of that sound.

“I am afraid that your reputation as master horologist may be in jeopardy.” Will moved closer to Hannibal and removed his father’s watch from his pocket. Hannibal took it and held it up to his ear, it was stuttering again.

“Strange.” Hannibal was perplexed which was rare. Will had meandered over to his work station and was looking with interest at the parts of the pocket watch laid out there.

“This is beautiful.” His voice was genuine and it pleased Hannibal more than he cared to admit.

“Thank you.”

“I see what you mean now about the calibre of pieces you are used to fixing.”

“Evidently this watch holds more secrets than it seems. There is no reason why it should have stopped keeping time.”

“That’s what everyone else says. It does though, it works for a while and then stops. You were my last hope, I may have to retire it.” Will looked back at Hannibal and smiled.

“Well let’s not be hasty, why don’t you leave it with me and I will see what I can do. I was perhaps over confident when I first looked at it.”

“I feel like that is a rare admission coming from you.”

Ah, yes that empathy Alana had spoken of. “Indeed.”

“So you accept the challenge?” Will raised an eyebrow at him and he found he was endeared.

“Yes I believe I must if my reputation is at stake.”

Will laughed again. "I insist on paying you for your time though."

"As you wish." Though he had no intention of charging him. "Would you like to leave me your number so I can contact you?"

"Yes of course." He fished out a battered looking business card. "Have you got a pen?"

Hannibal nodded and went to get one from the drawer. He handed it to Will who then put the card on the side of his work bench and scrawled his mobile number on it. He then handed it to Hannibal.

"This is also a rare admission? Your personal number?"

Will blushed and Hannibal's stomach flipped again. "Indeed."

"I will take great care of your father's watch. I will contact you in a few days with a progress report."

"Much obliged." Will said and left leaving Hannibal staring at the watch in his hand.

He noticed it a few moments after Will left, a change in the rhythm of the shop, it was before he put the music back on. There was one less layer of ticking. The small carriage clock that he kept on the counter by where Will had been standing had stopped. He walked over to it, he bent down and put his ear to the face. Nothing. It had never stopped not since he had refurbished it years ago. It had always kept perfect time. Always.

He smiled.

He was engrossed in his work, consumed with his usual focus. He had almost finished the pocket watch, it was gleaming and perfect. It pleased him greatly. He had a few other commissions he was working on which were almost complete. He wanted to be in a singular state of mind before he started on Will's watch.

It was a rainy, dull afternoon in Baltimore when he finally started to work on it. He made sure the door was locked, the outside light off, he chose some Mozart which soothed him and got to work. He sat down and laid the watch carefully out on the new soft cloth he had put out on

his desk for the purpose. Firstly he removed the leather strap, carefully setting them and the tiny screws aside. He concentrated his attention on the watch itself, gently snapping open the case he removed the movement. He used his small flat screwdriver to gently pop out the crystal.

He then looked at the glass covering, there were some scratches which were to be expected. He held it up to the lamp and examined them. Not too deep, only surface. Setting the glass and crystal aside next to the leather strap, he removed the case. He had a small bowl of warm water with very plain, delicate soap which he made himself for this purpose, a small toothbrush with the perfect amount of firmness and softness was placed next to the bowl. He gently dipped the toothbrush into the bowl of warm water. He gently and paying as much attention as possible he cleaned off all the dirt from the case, occasionally adding more moisture to the toothbrush. He held it up against the light, much better, he thought.

Using the spare soft cloth and his homemade version of brasso he dried off the case and buffed it until it was gleaming. Once satisfied, he got up and emptied the bowl of water in the small sink in the bathroom at the back of the shop. He rinsed the bowl and toothbrush and then refilled the bowl and added some soap. He walked back to the table and sat down. He cleaned the crystal using the same method he had cleaned the case.

He looked at the movement again, he decided to replace the mainspring. He had one in stock that would work, he had cleaned all the parts recently so it shouldn't be a problem. He went to work replacing it making sure to use just the right amount of oil.

He then used a small amount of crystal cement, he snapped the crystal in place and left it to dry. He went to work on the case and buffed away the scratches. He then reassembled it all. He wondered at adding a new strap but wasn't sure that's what Will would want. He would wait. He put the old strap back on, wound it up and set the time. He held it in his hand and admired his handiwork.

The watch looked much better and was keeping good time again. He smiled. He removed his own watch and replaced it with Will's intending to wear it for a few days to see if it continued to keep time.

He stretched and arched his back, moving his head side to side his neck clicked. He needed to swim he had been too engrossed in his work this week to go. He looked at the kit bag in the corner of the room and decided he needed to go tonight. Now that Will's watch was done he would enjoy the exercise.

Once at the pool he carefully placed the watch in the side of his bag in the locker. He loved to swim, one of the many benefits of being friends with the elite was a free membership to the

best gym in Baltimore, it had an Olympic size pool and was never too busy as the exorbitant membership meant the clientele were few. As it was so late there was no one in the pool and he could enjoy swimming the lengths by himself. He enjoyed the strain and stretch of his muscles as he glided through the water. He thought of nothing while he swam, his mind blissfully blank.

The pool had a wall of large glass windows which he could see the night's sky and stars. He had lithely jumped out of the pool and was resting with his legs still in the water and his hands and arms behind bracing himself. He breathed heavily but happily with the exertion. He looked at the dark night sky and suddenly wondered what Will was doing at this moment. Alana said he had seven dogs now. Maybe he was looking at the sky at the same time while his dogs mingled around his feet. The thought made him smile.

He slipped back into the pool and swam fifty more lengths until all thoughts of Will had been banished from his head. He didn't need the distraction of Will Graham in his life. He had his work. He had a good, uncomplicated life going. The last thing he needed was to get involved with a socially awkward, probably unstable FBI profiler. The next day Alana was coming over for her weekly dinner with Hannibal. He welcomed the distraction, she would always spend most of the evening talking about work and her boss Jack who always rubbed her the wrong way but they clearly had a mutual respect. He always found it amusing how she would push his buttons but he would never raise his voice to her unlike everyone else. Alana was like that able to get away with what most others would never. He admired her effortless charm. She had rung him and said she was bringing a friend with her, Margot. This meant they could eat in the dining room and he could make a display of dinner something he always enjoyed doing.

He opened the door to the two women, Margot was strikingly beautiful but with a wonderful vulnerability underneath. She was as charming as Alana. They sparked off each and Hannibal found he enjoyed seeing Alana like this, a slight flush in her cheeks and always laughing a little too hard. It was very becoming and he smiled to himself.

"That's not your usual watch?" Alana asked Hannibal as they were starting the first course. The plainness of it had caught her eye. "Wait is that Will's?"

Hannibal had meant to remove it before they arrived but had completely forgotten. "Who is Will?" Margot asked.

"Will Graham he works with me. I referred him to Hannibal as his father's watch kept stopping. It looks amazing Hannibal I almost didn't recognise it. May I take a closer look?"

"Of course." Hannibal removed it and handed it to Alana.

"I was wearing it to ensure it would keep time over a longer period. I must confess I forgot to take it off."

Margot looked at Hannibal with a cocked eyebrow, she saw straight through this admission and Hannibal felt more warmth towards her.

"It really looks amazing. It's still keeping time?" She handed it to Margot who took it, fingers brushing a fraction too long.

"Yes it's lovely" Margot said and handed it back to Hannibal who put it back on while Margot watched him.

"I was going to replace the strap but I wasn't sure if that's what Mr Graham would want."

His purposeful use of Will's formal name was not lost on Margot and she smiled. "Have you asked him?" Margot spoke with a purposely forced innocence.

"No. I was going to call tomorrow, I wanted to ensure it was working consistently."

"He is away for the next few days. A case. So I would probably leave it until next week." Alana said lightly.

Only Margot noticed the disappointment on Hannibal's face and the way he gingerly touched the leather strap before taking his wineglass and drinking another sip.

"So Hannibal, this food is exquisite. Did you train as a chef?" Margot asked smiling at Hannibal, who seemed relieved at the change in conversation.

"No. I did not train it has just been a hobby which I have been attempting to perfect for many years." His forced humbleness was staggeringly obvious to both women and Alana rolled her eyes.

"Attempting. Please Hannibal you and I both know the perfecting part happened many years ago!" She laughed and he nodded his head at her.

"Well I try. I enjoy the ritual of it and the enjoyment it brings others." Trying to better mask his false modesty, barely succeeding.

"Well if you ever get bored of watches I am sure you could open an amazing restaurant." Margot said as she devoured another slice of foie gras and moaned appreciatively. Hannibal noted the blush on Alana's pale skin as did, he was sure, Margot.

"I will bear it in mind." He smiled at Alana who looked quickly away.

"So how did you and Alana meet?" Margot said with a gossamer thin veiled attempt at nonchalance. Clearly wondering if they had ever been an item.

"I was in need of a psychologist and I was lucky enough to come under Alana's care." He sipped his wine while he waited for that piece of information to sink in.

"He is a former patient? I thought that was unethical to remain friends?" She aimed this at Alana.

"It was a brief relationship. I suppose it possibly is a bit unethical but as long as I don't psychoanalyse him and he doesn't ask me to then I feel we are all good." She looked at Hannibal and smiled, remembering when he had called her asking her for dinner that first time. How she had struggled with the decision but instinct took over and she had agreed. She was glad she did. Hannibal had become one of her closest friends. Margot saw the exchange between them and bristled slightly.

"I had PTSD from a rather unfortunate mugging incident where I ended a life in self defence. Alana was recommended to me by the police. She cured me of my issues. I called her and invited her for dinner to thank her, she reluctantly said yes. I have been having her over for dinner ever since!"

"Oh my god. That sounds awful. I'm sorry you had to go through that." Her jealousy faded a little with her sympathy.

"Well it was traumatic but it led me to Alana who has become one of my most treasured friends so for that I am grateful." He raised his glass, "to friendship!" He clinked Alana and then Margot's glass, who seemed to relax at the use of the word friend.

"Yes to friendship." Alana said looking at Hannibal.

"How may I ask did you two meet?" Hannibal carefully put his wineglass down and speared a piece of foie gras.

"Through my brother actually." Margot had a slight tremble in her voice as she spoke, Alana looked sympathetic. "He was murdered. I met Alana while I was talking to the FBI."

Alana always picking up strays, Hannibal's thoughts drifted to Will Graham. "I see a pattern forming Alana." Hannibal said jokingly.

"Margot was never my patient Hannibal. I was just there when they interviewed her." Alana's tone possessed a gentle warning which Hannibal happily heeded, he had not seen her like this for quite some time and he didn't want to scare Margot away. She was interesting, the fact that she seemed less than upset for her brothers murder was interesting.

"May I ask how long ago this was?" Hannibal attempted a light tone as he fixed his gaze on Margot who met it defiantly.

"About a month." She responded with no trace of grief.

"I am sorry to hear it."

"We were not close." *Evidently*, Hannibal thought. "He was not the kindest man."

"Family can be complicated." Hannibal replied and smiled.

"Yes." Margot whispered and looked away.

Sensing the change in tension Hannibal took the opportunity to clear the plates and retreat back to the kitchen to retrieve the second course.

"Who is this Will Graham that Hannibal seems enamoured with? Hannibal doesn't strike me as someone who is interested by many people." Margot leant across the table her tone conspiratorial.

"You think he is enamoured?" Alana had been vaguely thinking the same after he described their first encounter. Will was so unlike Hannibal in many ways that she could not imagine him thinking about Will in that way. However Will was still Will, he may be scruffy but in a particularly attractive way.

"He's wearing his watch! Clearly has been for a few days. Does he normally go around wearing his clients watches to make sure they keep time? Especially a watch so plain, I imagine him to be a Patek sort of person usually."

Alana laughed, "yes he is, he would normally never be caught dead with something so pedestrian."

"Have you two ever...?" Margot's voice trailed off.

"No." Alana met Margot's gaze. "We are just friends." They both smiled at each other.

"Well I think you should see if Will likes Hannibal." Margot laughed.

"No I am not playing matchmaker. Plus Will would not react well to that. He is singularly independent," Alana imagined Will's sullen face when anything was suggested to him.

"I didn't say that. Just test the waters."

Hannibal returned with the second course. "Loin of venison in a sloe gin and blackberry glaze." Hannibal set the plates down with a flourish and both Margot and Alana congratulated him on his success.

"This really is stunning Hannibal." Margot hummed appreciatively as Hannibal poured more red wine for her.

"You are too kind." He was getting no better at the false modesty but enjoyed making the attempt.

After Alana and Margot had left, Hannibal giving Alana a knowing but approving look, he cleared his kitchen and dining room. Finally making his way to his lounge to relax with a drink in front of the fire. He thought about the events of the evening and how lovely it had been to be in both Alana and Margot's company, they seemed very well suited and he wished Alana luck.

His thoughts eventually wandered to Will again, he was looking at the watch on his wrist it was still keeping time which pleased him. He was disappointed that Will had left town. It seemed strange that his thoughts which had often been led to Will these days, at strange times of the day, wondering what Will was doing or where he was, imagining him at home with his

dogs or at the FBI. To find he had left town unknowingly to Hannibal made him feel oddly disappointed that his fantasies had been incorrect.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Hannibal and Will have a first date (even though Will doesn't realise it). Alana and Margot tease Hannibal. Hannibal cooks a lot. Will keeps making time stop but he doesn't realise it. Poor clueless Will!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Will had returned to Baltimore, he had been away for most of the week, his head being entrenched in a killers making him prickly. However he still had students who needed lecturing so he was back in his hall describing death and violence.

Alana had been waiting just outside, she watched as the students filtered out and Will distractedly went to his desk and started to gather up his things.

"Hi Will." She said somewhat carefully, as if she approached a frightened deer.

"Alana. How are you?" His features softened at the sight of her which made her feel slightly bolder.

"I am well thank you. I heard you were back so I wanted to check in with you."

He smiled at that. "That's kind but honestly I'm fine. Just tired. I just need a few days at home with my dogs, I'm going fishing this weekend that always helps."

"Good. Have you heard from Hannibal?" She gauged his reaction to his name, he at first looked confused as if he completely forgotten who Hannibal was (not a good sign but then Will was always absent minded when he was in the middle of a case), then he seemed to remember and sighed slightly with frustration she wasn't sure whether this frustration was aimed at himself, Hannibal or her. Then he looked at her with a confused expression as he realised she was gauging his reaction.

"No." Was all he decided to say.

"Well he has fixed your watch. I told him you were out of town for a few days. I can let him know you are back if you like?"

Again with that higher pitch of forced nonchalance. He raised an eyebrow. "I can call him. Thank you."

"Okay."

"Alana."

"Yes."

"What's going on?" She should know that his empathy was always on, trying to hide anything from him was an impossibility.

"Nothing. Margot and I just had dinner with Hannibal while you were away, I saw your watch it looked good. I was just wondering if you had a chance to see it." She was the one purposefully not making eye contact now.

"With Margot?" He raised an eyebrow. "Margot Verger? The woman you interviewed after her brothers murder?"

"Okay A. He wasn't murdered, his death was ruled an accident. B. I didn't interview her I was present with Jack when he interviewed her."

"Still that's a fine line Alana."

"She has been cleared. "

"You and I both know Jack still has his suspicions about her."

"Well I don't. And Jack has his suspicions about everyone." She was being defensive, they both knew it.

Will smiled and put his hands up. "No judgement Alana. I am glad you are seeing people."

"I'm not seeing her! We are just friends." Even she didn't think that sounded convincing.

"Anyway what about you and Hannibal? You gave him your mobile number. You never do that."

"He has my fathers watch. He would need to contact me." After he'd done that he did wonder at why, it was very unlike him to give out his mobile number and then there was the odd blushing which he absolutely had not been thinking about these last few days.

"Mmmm Hmmm." It was her turn to raise an eyebrow now. "He said he thought you were interesting." She paused to let that sink in for a moment, as Will resolutely stared at the ground. "He doesn't usually say that about anything other than watches."

"I am sure he was just being polite." Even as he said that he knew it wasn't convincing, considering their first meeting and how rude Hannibal had been.

"Perhaps." She said and smiled, she gently touched Will on the arm and he looked up at her.

"Anyway you should call him. He wanted to know if you wanted the leather strap replaced. You still have his number?"

"Yes."

"Good."

"How do you know Hannibal anyway?" Will realised he had not asked her.

"Through work. I treated him briefly."

"He was a patient?"

"Don't start Will. It's not like that, we are friends. I treated him for a short time. He invited me for dinner to thank me and we have been friends ever since. He sees someone else now occasionally when he needs to." Will found he was intrigued, Hannibal hadn't struck him as the that type to need to see someone, he had been confident bordering on arrogant, not the type to ask for help. Alana could see his thought process.

"I can't tell you why I saw him. He went through a lot at the time though. I know he seems arrogant but he's quite sensitive underneath all the bravado."

"You said you saw my watch, at his house? Did he show it to you?" It had just occurred to him how strange that was, why did he take it home with him?

"Actually he was wearing it." Will was strangely pleased about this. "He said he wanted to make sure it kept time after he fixed it. He said he forgot to take it off." She said this as if she was not entirely convinced of it.

"You think he kept wearing it on purpose?" This seemed unlikely, Will had remembered the watch Hannibal had been wearing the last time he was in the shop, it was beautiful and elegant, clearly expensive. Why would he want to wear Will's father's watch which was plain and boring.

"I think he had forgotten, as he said, to take it off."

"Hmmm. Did he say anything else?"

"Like what?"

"I don't know but you seem to be implying something."

"I'm not implying anything. He just said you were interesting and as I said he doesn't normally describe people that way." In fact this was the only time she had ever heard Hannibal use that term for a person.

"I'm really not though. I hope you set him straight."

The attempt at false modesty was something they both had in common, Alana thought. "No I did not. You are actually quite interesting. Occasionally."

He laughed. "If you say so."

"What did you think about him?"

"Hannibal? He seemed arrogant, full of himself and pretentious."

She laughed. "Well yes, he is all of those things. He is also very loyal, talented and one of the most intelligent people I have ever met, not to mention a very snappy dresser wouldn't you agree?"

"I didn't really notice." He wondered why he was lying. It was the first thing he had noticed, he felt distinctly under dressed and aware of the shabbiness of his clothes when in his presence. Hannibal had made it quite clear he had noticed the old fishing jacket and faded trousers.

"Yeah right." Alana said. "It's the first thing everyone notices about him."

"Well Alana as you may have noticed I don't really pay much attention to the way people dress, I can barely dress myself."

"That's true but it's also something you do on purpose so as not to draw attention to yourself, it's your form of camouflage. You are always pointedly scruffy. You cannot deny you enjoy the exasperation on Jack's face every time he sees you." Will would often forget how perceptive Alana could be, being one of the few people who could see him for who he really was.

"If you say so." He wasn't going to give her the satisfaction of letting her know she was right. As usual.

"Anyway I also came in here to tell you Jack wants to see you down in the lab." She had gotten all she was going to get from Will about Hannibal at this point, she thought she had a pretty good idea of what the situation was even if Will hadn't admitted it to himself yet, he was intrigued.

"Then I had better get going." He gathered up the rest of his papers and files stuffing them into his briefcase, glad to see an end to this conversation. He had no time for relationships, he had too much going on, his head was not all there these days and he liked his solitude with his dogs. He certainly did not need Alana match making for him.

"Okay." Will walked past her. "Don't forget to call Hannibal though."

He waved his hand at her and carried on walking. She laughed.

A few days had passed and Hannibal rang Will, the phone went to voicemail and he left a message asking for Will to call him back when he had a chance. He eventually did later that evening.

"Mr Graham. Thank you for returning my call."

"Please call me Will."

"Well Will I am hoping I have recovered my reputation as your watch seems to be working perfectly and has been for the last few days."

"Oh. Brilliant. Shall I come by the shop and get it?"

"Actually I am at home now."

"Of course. I can come by in the morning?"

"Have you eaten?"

"Ummm."

"If you like you may come by my home, I am cooking pork this evening. It's been slow roasting all day. There is more than enough to share. Unless you are vegetarian?" He was really hoping he wasn't.

"No not vegetarian."

"Wonderful. I will text you my address. See you around 7?"

"Ummm yeah."

Hannibal hung up and smiled, text Will the address. He received a reply. - Are you sure?

Hannibal smiled, text back - yes please come. No arguments.

Another response. - ok but only because Alana raves about your cooking.

Will arrived slightly late grasping a bottle of red wine and looking wonderfully awkward. He also looked smarter than Hannibal had seen him as he had come straight from work. He was wearing a dark grey overcoat and a jacket with patches on the sleeves, a plaid shirt but a nice one and a tie. Hannibal took the overcoat and hung it up, he took the wine from him.

"Thank you."

"It was the least I could do. Sorry I'm late." He was looking at the floor again.

Hannibal touched his arm gently. "Please it's not a problem. Come through." The touch was gone almost as soon as it had arrived. Will found he was not sure it had even happened. He followed Hannibal through to the dining room which was wonderfully dark, a herb garden growing on the wall caught his eye.

"Wow." Was all Will could manage. Hannibal's home being so different from his slightly dingy shop. This was stylised and modern and purposefully designed. Will's eyes drifted to the table, a wonderful centrepiece had been arranged with antlers and deep blue flowers complimenting the cobalt blue of the wall paper.

"I am glad you are impressed." Hannibal was enjoying seeing Will off balance. It was strangely satisfying to see him try to work Hannibal out.

"This is very, well extravagant." Will had heard from Alana that Hannibal enjoyed entertaining and cooking but this seemed like much more of a show than he was expecting.

"Please sit down. Let me pour you some wine." Will gingerly sat down feeling strangely exposed, he drank the wine as soon as it was poured. Hannibal smiled. "I will just be a moment." He left Will in the dining room staring at the herb garden on the wall wondering what on earth he was doing here.

Hannibal returned with two plates of food, setting one down in front of Will.

"Wow." The plate of food looked like a work of art. "This looks incredible." Will was starting to realise that everything Hannibal did, he did with perfection.

"Pan fried scallops with lime and coriander to start with."

"I wasn't expecting this." Will smiled as he leant closer to his plate and inhaled the scents of the dish.

"I hope you are pleasantly surprised." Hannibal sat down opposite him.

"Of course." Will was starting to feel cornered and was strangely calm about it.

"Did you train as a chef? This is not how most people cook." Will took a bite of perfectly cooked scallop and moaned with pleasure.

"No. It's just something I enjoy doing. What about you? What do you like doing when you are not profiling serial killers?"

Will laughed and tilted his head slightly which Hannibal found oddly endearing. "Well, yes as you can imagine it's important to have an escape. Alana has probably told you I have many dogs so they keep me busy and I like to fish."

"Fishing. A productive pursuit."

"I find it very calming. Wading out into the stream just you and nature. Helps to clear the mind."

"Sounds perfect. I find the same when I am cooking, a calmness in the ritual of it and satisfaction of having produced something afterwards."

Will laughed, "well I don't always catch something but yes when I do it is very satisfying. I also make my own lures."

"All part of the ritual."

"I suppose so. I hadn't given it much thought."

"I assume you can't give me too many details, but how was your trip?"

"It was fine. The case is still open, but we are close to catching him."

"That must be rewarding when you do catch someone. To know you have done good, it must be very satisfying."

"It can be. I do get tired of looking at it all day, of having to think about death and violence it's exhausting."

"Longing for a simpler life?"

"In some ways yes. Then if I didn't do this I don't know what I would do. What about you? Why watches?"

"I think it's the same reason I enjoy cooking, it's the ritual of it, the simplicity of the nature of the task. Fixing time, taking what has long since stopped and making it move again is very satisfying, I also enjoy the aesthetics I find time very beautiful."

"I have never had much luck with watches. Not just my fathers but any watch I had I seemed to break or I would lose it somehow."

"Yes I noticed that." Will raised an eyebrow. "Two separate clocks in my shop stopped after your visits. Neither of which have ever done so before."

"That's strange. Probably just a coincidence." Hannibal didn't seemed annoyed just amused. Will felt that blush coming up again and decided to concentrate on the fabulous food.

"Yes, perhaps. Your fathers watch has kept perfect time since it's been in my possession. I suppose we will have to see how it fares once it is returned to you."

Will tried to subtly look at Hannibal's wrist to see if he was wearing it. It appeared he had no watch on at all.

"You seriously think I make watches stop."

"It's not unprecedented. I have heard of a people who can't wear watches as they will not keep time. Some humans produce a stronger electro magnetic field than others. Do you have problems with technology?"

"No more than most people. Sounds sketchy to me." He always had though, his projector in

his classroom was always breaking, he seemed to go through more laptops than most. Actually now he thought about the guys at the lab would always make sure he stood at the end away from the computers. They also always used physical boards instead of the screens they had, he always assumed it was their preference.

"Perhaps. Just an interesting theory." Hannibal could see he had made Will think. He enjoyed the sensation of rattling him. He also found it extraordinary that Will had gone through life not noticing the effect he had.

Hannibal stood and cleared the first course, Will sipped his wine enjoying the smells which were emanating from the kitchen.

"Slow roasted pork with vegetable medley, applesauce and potato gratin." Hannibal placed the plate in front of Will tried not to remember to breathe with Hannibal so close. Hannibal was wondering when he could buy Will a new aftershave.

"Wow." Will said again. "Looks and smells delicious."

"More wine?"

"Yes why not one more glass." Hannibal smiled and poured him another glass.

Hannibal refilled his own glass and re took his seat opposite Will who was tucking into his food with gusto. "I imagine Alana has told you how we met?"

Will stopped eating for a moment and wondered how best to approach this. He wasn't going to bring it up he was surprised at Hannibal's openness. However everything about this man seemed to be surprising. He tried not to think about it too much. "Yes. Not the details just that she treated you briefly."

"I was mugged outside my shop, there was an altercation and I took his life in self defence. It was not something I dealt with well." Hannibal said this in fairly well disguised tone, he didn't like to talk about it but found that people would always find a way to bring it up or that they would be so clearly not bringing it up that it made him feel worse. With Will he strangely wanted to be open. Plus this was a man used to violence and crime so he hoped would not be put off by it. He did still have nightmares and the sensation of being followed was one that would lurk after him some days stronger than others.

"Wow. That's, that's a lot to go through." Will was never sure what to say to victims. He

actually hated that term as it seemed to imply weakness. Hannibal certainly didn't seem to project weakness. Just because the apparent victims he dealt with were dead didn't make them anymore strong or brave to Will. They were always looking death straight in the eye, eyes wide open and judging.

"Alana helped. I just thought you should know." Alana was his lifeline at the time, someone so different from his usual company, she just listened and accepted him for who he was. For what he had done. She accepted so that he could.

"How long ago was it?" Alana hadn't actually said.

"A few years now. It always seems to be there though in the back of my mind somehow, it always feels more recent than it was." He thought that by bringing it up he would shut it down again quickly, he never spoke like this to people about it.

"Violence does that, it has a lasting effect, a shadow." It certainly felt like that to Will, there were days he felt so haunted by shadows of murderers and their victims there was no where he could be alone.

"Yes. Yes it does." That's exactly it, Hannibal did feel marked by it like a part of his shadow was always a bit darker and a bit longer.

"Were you hurt? In the attack, physically I mean?"

"Broken rib, cuts and bruises. More psychological damage than physical." He had been in hospital for a week, it as a blur of pain meds and disturbing dreams. He had wanted to leave as soon as he could, but the moment he had returned home it felt even emptier and more haunted in his own house. He would wake up fighting invisible ghosts, sweating and torn stitches.

"I know it well." Will still had nightmares and woke up drenched in his misery most nights.

"Alana mentioned you were stabbed." He hadn't meant it to come out quite so blunt.

Will didn't flinch though, Hannibal got the idea he rarely flinched at the mention of violence, put him a crowded room however and he would be a deer in headlights. "Yes when I was a cop in New Orleans, shoulder, still smarts when it rains."

"That must be a problem living here."

"Yeah I guess I am my own worst enemy." Which was news to no one.

"We all are." *You more than most Mr Graham*, he thought.

"You didn't move your shop though."

"No. I thought about it, but it would have felt like a defeat. One of the ways you overcome PTSD is to change the memory, to make something positive happen where the negative happened. So I made my shop back into the sanctuary it had been."

"How?"

Hannibal smiled at the memory, Alana and her bordering on unprofessional therapies! "Well I am sure she will kill me for telling you this. Alana and I got very drunk sitting outside the shop one night. We moved the record player to the front, opened the door and sat on the steps drinking tequila which I cannot now even smell without my stomach churning. We watched the sun come up, laughed and danced in the street. It was a beautiful evening." Will didn't know how to take that, he knew Alana was a fan of the unorthodox but getting drunk with a patient was quite unlike her. "Wow I mean that's unlike even Alana."

"Do not judge her, she had tried many things and suggested many more. She referred me to someone else but before I went she turned up tequila in hand and we just went with it. Now when I feel the shadow close in when I walk into my shop I stop and remember Alana and I waltzing in the street."

Hannibal's face had softened so much at the memory Will felt suddenly moved and had the perfect image of them dancing together. He also felt a sudden stab of jealousy. Had they kissed that night? Drunkenly made love in the shop? Why should he care?!

Hannibal seemed to sense this train of thought. "Nothing has ever happened between us. We are just friends. She helped me through a very difficult time."

Will looked away, how was Hannibal reading his thoughts so easily. "It wouldn't matter if it had. She is very special Alana to me also."

"That she is. She also brought you into my life another thing I am forever grateful for." As soon as he said it the blush on Will's skin was there, so beautiful he wanted to touch his face. He smiled.

"I would never have eaten such amazing food had she not recommended you, so for that too I am also grateful." He smiled at Hannibal awkwardly, who inclined his head and nodded a thank you.

"Would you like desert? I have some chocolate torte made with South American dark chocolate laced with chilli and some homemade vanilla infused ice cream." Hannibal got up and started to clear Will's plate.

Will put his hand on Hannibal's and they both stopped and stared at their hands touching for a moment too long. "Let me help you. You have done so much." Will managed to spit out and he stood and helped Hannibal with the plates, following him into the kitchen. As soon as he entered he could smell the chocolate rich and deep in the air. "I was going to say I had no room for desert but that smells divine."

Will placed his plate on the counter and watched Hannibal. "You must have a small piece you will not regret it. We can eat in the lounge and I will show you your fathers watch." Will stood while Hannibal deftly cleared their plates and then began to present desert. Will found he was fascinated by Hannibal's movements as he carefully sliced the torte, placed it on the plates, then scooped a perfect round ball of thick ice cream all topped off with a vibrant raspberry coulis and a sprinkling of cocoa powder.

"Looks good." Will said and tried to ignore the strange butterflies he was getting in his stomach.

They moved to the lounge where Hannibal had a fire going. He placed the tray he carried with the desert and coffee on the large wooden coffee table in the middle of the room. Will's eyes were taking in the surroundings, another beautifully decorated room but this one seemed more personal. The harpsichord in the corner not withstanding.

"Please sit." Hannibal gestured and then handed him his desert. "Enjoy it before the ice cream melts."

"Thank you." Will's voice was suddenly quiet, he felt strangely overwhelmed.

Hannibal seemed to sense it and allowed them to just sit in comfortable silence, eating and

listening to the crackling fire. The chocolate melted on Will's tongue and left a delicately spicy aftertaste. It was as delicious as the rest of the meal.

Once they had both finished, Hannibal retrieved Will's watch from the bureau drawer. He had put it in a soft cloth bag as was his custom at the shop. He took it out and handed it to Will, he turned on one of that lamps by where Will was sitting so he could inspect it closer.

"I didn't know if you wanted the strap changed. I can do that for you anytime. I didn't want to presume." Hannibal went to pour some coffee as Will looked at the watch.

"It looks amazing." Will's breath had been taken away by how good his fathers watch looked. He could not remember it ever being this clean or gleaming. "It looks new, the face is so clear and the silver looks stunning." He held it up to his ear. "It sounds great too. Alana said you were magic but this is beyond what I expected." Will was strangely moved by the trouble to which Hannibal had gone. "How much do I owe you for this?"

Hannibal placed a cup of coffee on the small table by Will and then taking his own cup he sat down on the couch opposite Will. "Nothing at all, for Alana's friends are my friends. It was a pleasure."

"No, I insist I give you something. You have spent so much time on this. It looks like a brand new watch. I have never seen it like this even when my father had it." Will could not stop staring at it, Hannibal found he could not stop staring at Will.

Will seemed to be in a world of memories as he looked at the watch turning it over and over in his hands. He felt suddenly consumed by a lifetime past of memories, his dad coming home late at night, he would wait at the top of stairs for him, always terrified of the night he wouldn't come home. Sundays in the backyard grilling crawfish, his dad giving him sips of beer from the bottle, the sunshine and heat of the summer. Walking home from school by himself, setting himself up at the table do his homework, fixing dinner for both him and his dad, eating alone in front of the TV leaving a plate for his dad covered in foil in the fridge for when he came home. Falling asleep on the sofa and being woken by strong arms carrying him up the stairs to his bed. The soft lull of his dads voice as he read stories to him or the loud boom as he shouted at him to clean his room.

"Will. Are you alright?"

Will realised he was crying and quickly wiped the tears away embarrassed. "I'm so sorry. I just had a wave of memories. Sometimes i can't control it I just slip into a time stream and I can't find my way back."

Hannibal smiled gently, Will's crooked smile and glistening eyes made him look so beautiful it almost took his breath away. "Time is like water, it takes us over, we have no choice but to go with its current. Sometimes forward and sometimes backwards." Will looked at Hannibal who was looking at him with such openness it made his heart hurt. "There is no shame in that."

"I wear this watch every day and I don't see it you know? I am not sure I have ever truly seen it until now. I feel like I'm seeing it when he first bought it, like I can imagine him buying this, it seems so real. He seems so real to me again." Will smiled and looked away from Hannibal back at the watch again. He put it in his wrist and did up the strap. "You must let me pay Hannibal. Please."

Hannibal smiled. "Perhaps a trade?"

"A trade? What could I possibly have that you would want?" Hannibal loved that Will would have no idea about the answer to that question. Hannibal wondered at what he saw when he looked in the mirror. How could he not see what he was? Then again Hannibal had always prided himself in finding diamonds in the rough.

"Perhaps you could teach me to fish?" What Hannibal wanted to say was, 'you, I would like your time, I would like us to spend our time together, intertwined' the suddenness of this thought shocked him and he hoped his face didn't betray him.

Will laughed imagining the immaculately dressed, perfectly put together Hannibal in waders in a stream, the image of him in one of Will's fishing hats and vests was hilarious. "I can't imagine you fishing!" Hannibal looked slightly hurt which made Will laugh more. "Sorry! I don't mean to laugh, it's just look at you, look at where you live. I cannot imagine you slumming it with me in a river."

"Perhaps I can surprise you."

Will stopped laughing as he realised Hannibal had already surprised him, everything about him was surprising. Including his consistent ability to make Will blush. "You are right. If you won't except money than I would be more than happy to teach you to fish. Only if you promise to cook it afterwards."

Hannibal laughed. "That sounds perfect."

Will realised three things as he sat there comfortably laughing with this man. This was a date

and he hadn't realised it. He had also just agreed to a second one. Lastly that Alana was going to insufferable.

"I just realised that Alana is going to be insufferable about this." Will spoke before he realised, suddenly wishing he hadn't said anything.

Hannibal cocked an eyebrow. "Why?" Will looked at him and then they both smiled and Hannibal laughed. "Yes, yes she is!"

Will eventually had to leave, he needed to get back to his dogs so he reluctantly left the warmth of Hannibal's lounge and company. He was at the door, Hannibal had helped him with his coat, Hannibal becoming endeared by Will's aftershave more and more.

"Thank you again for everything. For the watch, for the meal and the company." Will was still moved by the watch.

"My pleasure. Thank you for your company also and for the wine." Hannibal smiled and they looked at each other. Will was suddenly struck by Hannibal's beauty, his cheekbones and the curve of his lips, the silver in his hair as it caught the light. He knew he was staring, he knew he should stop.

"Well I should go." Will said rather lamely. Hannibal took half a step towards Will, now they were standing closer than they should. Will didn't step back though, he found he was holding his breath, his mind a joyful panic that Hannibal was about to kiss him. Before he had time to fully form this thought, Hannibal took him in an embrace and lightly kissed his cheek.

"Good night Will, I hope that the waters of time are kind to you in your dreams tonight." Hannibal whispered this into Will's ear his breath hot, laced with coffee and chocolate. Will found he closed his eyes and returned the embrace.

As soon as it had happened Hannibal released Will, who felt dizzy at the sudden loss of contact. Hannibal reached behind him and opened the door, the cold air suddenly bringing him to his senses.

"Thank you, Hannibal." He said and left feeling strangely like he had been put under spell.

As Hannibal closed the door he looked at the Grandfather clock in the hallway, an antique piece he had spent a year restoring. He religiously wound it, checked it. A favourite of his. It had stopped. The house was eerily quiet. He smiled.

Alana was indeed insufferable when Will saw her at work. She didn't even need to speak to him she was just standing there in front of his desk looking at him with a smile on her face.

"Something amusing?" Will was attempting not to give anything away. He knew he wouldn't last long, but he would still make her work for it.

"No. Nothing at all. How was your dinner?" Her tone a forced light.

"Which dinner?" Probably too far.

"Will, you know very well which dinner. Your dinner date with Hannibal?" She was leaning on the desk now getting in his space, he moved his chair back.

"It was not a date. I went to pick up my watch." He flashed her the watch on his wrist which was still working. "I am sure you have spoken to Hannibal. What did he say?"

She eyed him at that one. "Okay fine. He didn't say a thing. Nothing. I could get nothing out of him." Will smiled. "I didn't expect to, he's a gentleman."

"Well then you know there is nothing to tell." Will ignored the gentleman remark.

"I highly doubt it. He's got a bounce in his step. It's actually a little disconcerting." She had gone by the shop and he had been bright, verging on bubbly it was most strange. The Hannibal she was used to was snarky and judgmental.

"Maybe he was just having a good day. How is Margot anyway? Does she also have a bounce in her step. I notice you do." He had noticed it when she walked in, her happiness was coming off her in waves it was a lovely feeling to have it wash over him instead of grief and despair and fear which was what he spent most of his time using his empathy to feel. He grinned at the blush on her face.

"Margot is fine thank you." She was always caught off guard by that empathy of his. Though she was glad to see him smiling, especially as he was projecting her own joy back at her.

"Fine. Margot is.. well she.... we it's going very well." That grin again so disconcerting. "It's like I have finally met someone who understands me, she is exciting and beautiful but

also kind and strong. She has been through so much and she carries it so well. I find I can't stop looking at her."

"Alana I am so happy for you honestly. I would love to properly meet her sometime." He would love to be surrounded by the happiness of a blossoming love. It would be such a nice change for him.

"Maybe we could double date? She wants to meet you. She has already met Hannibal they got on very well." Will looked horrified and started to shuffle the papers on his desk. "Come on Will I told you about Margot give me something. I get it you are not at double date level yet. Tell me something? Did you have a nice evening? What was the food like? Did he make a move on you?"

Will laughed and stopped shuffling papers. "Okay fine. Yes I had a nice evening he is very interesting to talk to. He told me about you two dancing in the street." Alana smiled and laughed at the memory. "The food was amazing, it was the best meal I have ever had. No he didn't exactly make a move on me."

"What does that mean?"

"Which part?"

"Will."

"Okay. He hugged me, kissed me the cheek. He asked me to teach him how to fish." Alana threw her head back and laughed, Will joined her, "I know I had the same reaction but he's serious."

"Well he didn't mention that."

"Probably because he didn't want you laughing at him, especially after I did!"

"You didn't!"

"I couldn't help it the image of him in waders and one of my fishing hats was too funny."

Alana started laughing again. "Agreed! So when are you going to teach him? That's a second

date though which you have agreed to."

"I know I mean I didn't even realise I had agreed to a first date. He just has this way of assuming his way, it's kind of disconcerting." Will hadn't realised until just then, Hannibal didn't ask him things he just assumed the answer.

"Yeah he does that." Alana had experienced it when he asked her for dinner the first time, she had let herself after a while just give into him but she was glad she did. "Honestly Will I think he is lonely. He doesn't let many people get close. After he was attacked he became quite isolated. That night we spent drinking together was the first time he let me in. It took a lot of tequila."

Will laughed. "He did mention the tequila."

"Just be careful though, he is more fragile than he seems."

"I will I promise. I don't want to go fast trust me. I am not even sure there is anything there. I enjoy his company and his cooking." Will laughed but he could not forget how he felt when he thought Hannibal was going to kiss him. How okay he was with it. How disappointed that it didn't happen. How he had almost moaned when Hannibal whispered in his ear.

After Alana eventually left, still feeling giddy from her company he checked his phone and had a missed call and a text message from Hannibal. He felt like the giddiness had just increased. He took a deep breath and read the message.

I would like to book my fishing lesson Mr Graham. When would you be free? (I suddenly find myself missing your watch and would like to see it again. Hope it's still running.) -H

Will read it again, was it flirty? Maybe. He wasn't sure. Why was this so hard? The Mr Graham was confusing but the brackets they seemed more familiar. He hated this part.

Good evening Mr Lecter. I remain at your pleasure regarding the fishing lesson. May I be as forward to suggest this weekend? (The watch is still running. Your reputation remains intact. I have to confess to wishing it would stop so i could find a reason to see you again.) -W

He hesitated before sending it but then he trusted Alana, she had said he had a bounce in his step. Screw it. He sent it.

This weekend would be wonderful. I look forward to your experienced instruction in all things fish related. (You or your watch never need a reason to see me.) -H.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoy this. Loving the comments so far please keep them coming! They give me life!

Next part is being worked on at the moment... Alana and Hannibal dancing in the street is not to be missed!

Xxxx

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Flashback to Hannibal's attack which is quite violent. There is also much fluff to counteract the violence. A flashback of Hannibal and Alana dancing together. Hannibal and Will go fishing also....

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

He had been so broken the last time she had seen him. She had tried all the usual things, including EMDR, all the usual therapies, all the medications. It had been 2 years and she had seen some improvement in his condition but not enough to make her feel like she was progressing. She knew he should try CBT next and she had lined up an appointment with someone else. During the two years of therapy she had found that she enjoyed his company he was an interesting person, it wasn't just that she felt the usual amount of sympathy she always felt for her patients.

She wasn't really sure how it happened that she had ended up outside his shop holding a bottle of tequila and some fancy canapés she had bought at a deli. It was a lovely, rare, warm summers evening in Baltimore. There she was, standing there. Deciding whether to knock on the shop door. She tested the door, locked. She took a deep breath and started to bang on the door. She could hear the music being played in the back and so banged loudly and consistently as well as shouted for a good five minutes before the music stopped. She realised making a person with PTSD jump was not entirely a good idea but he had turned his phone off as he always did when he was working so she had no choice.

"Hannibal. It's Alana. Open up." She announced. "I know you are in there, you just turned the music off." Good god he was stubborn. "Hannibal just open up please."

Eventually she heard footsteps and locks, lots of locks being unlocked and unbolted.

"Hi." She said and thrust the bottle of tequila at him.

He took it looked at it approvingly. He didn't move from the doorway. "What are you doing here Dr Bloom?"

"Ugh Hannibal please call me Alana. Let me in."

He looked at the bottle to see if it had been opened. It had. He looked to see how much was left. He arched at eyebrow. "I was out here for five minutes trying to get you to open the door I got bored. Come on let me in."

"No you are drunk and will break something. Hold on." He closed the door again and she sighed. He re-appeared a few minutes later, during which time Alana had taken another swig from the bottle, with a blanket, some cushions and two mugs. He placed the cushions on the front step and motioned for Alana to sit which she did, he put the blanket over their legs. Alana poured some tequila into the mugs, they clinked and he drank and she smiled at him.

"What are you doing here, Alana?" He sounded resigned, but his voice was warm she liked his accent.

"Well I came to a decision."

"What, pray tell, was that?"

God she loved the way he spoke, he was a throw back, she also loved the way he dressed all three piece suits, tailored to perfection. She was also enjoying seeing him in just his shirt with sleeves rolled up, no jacket, waistcoat and loosened tie though, casual Hannibal had its appeal. "Well. I decided that one of the ways to treat PTSD that relates to a place, especially if you have to return to that place is to change the memory, to make a better, more positive memory in the same place."

"So you decided that a positive memory would be you, drunk in my shop." He took another sip of tequila.

"Well no, yes, in this scenario we would both be drunk. You have some catching up to do."

She moved the mug up to his lips again and encouraged him to down the rest, which he did, she then refilled the mug. "Again." She said and he laughed and acquiesced. "Better. I also brought food. Fancy food like I know you like."

He noticed the bag and gave an approving nod. "So you decided to come over here and force feed me tequila and canapés in order to make a good memory."

"Well yes."

"Alana.."

"Hey just drink. Also eat if you like." She handed him the bag which he opened. There was caviar, smoked salmon and some cured meats, vegetable crisps and cheese.

"Wow that's quite a haul." He was impressed.

"Thank you. Look I know this is ridiculous. Your referral came through today." She handed him the envelope with the appointment information. "I just wanted to give it one last ditch attempt to help you. I hate failing."

"You haven't failed Alana. I am much improved since we started. I am back to work. I left my house. These are all achievements. The next step I will take is because of you. I appreciate it, more than you know." He did, she had saved him so much already. He could see the light at the end of the tunnel. He agreed with her that CBT was then next step. He had been thinking he would miss her and that he wanted to invite her for dinner to thank her. "I was going to invite you for dinner."

"Well let's just enjoy this evening and see." She did want to remain friends, she just wasn't sure how it was going to work between them and this scared her. So appearing here drunk had been her temporary solution.

"Okay." He rooted around in the bag and retrieved the tub of caviar and the vegetable crisps, both of which he opened. They were soon devouring them between shots of tequila. Hannibal soon found himself relaxed in her company and starting to feel quite tipsy.

"So it's good you are back at work. Have you seen friends? Cooked for anyone?"

A pained smile. "I have cooked yes but only for myself. My friends have become less after the... incident. People are wary of me now. I guess killing someone makes people afraid even if you did almost die yourself." He drank more tequila.

"People are afraid Hannibal. Everyone walks around scared all the time. They don't know what to say to you, what to do to help. You don't make it easy either you have a wall around you a mile high and I don't think that's just because of the attack. I get the feeling it takes a lot to get to know you."

"Is this why you brought reinforcement in the guise of alcohol and caviar? Loosen me up."

Alana smiled. "Yes. Is it working?"

He laughed. "Yes I suppose it is. You are right though I always had a wall up and it's gotten worse since the attack." Maybe he did need to try to let people back in. He found all his friends so dull these days, they seemed so flat. "I guess that my old life doesn't appeal as much as it once did. The people they seem so boring to me now."

"Well maybe you need to make new friends." She clinked his mug with hers and he smiled.

"It appears as if I already have."

Alana smiled as she looked into those brown eyes of his in which she had a tendency to get lost.

"I hope so."

"What about you Alana? If we are to be friends surely I should know more about you. Tell me a secret as you know all mine." His voice was not slurred but his accent was thicker and it slipped under her skin and made her shiver slightly. She suddenly felt like he could cast a spell with his voice and she would be powerless to resist.

"I love your voice. Sounds even better when you are drunk." She could not believe she had just said that, she clapped a hand over her mouth and began giggling.

He found this strangely adorable. "I'm glad you like my voice. What else do you like about me?"

Alana was being taken in now like a moth to a flame, he had lowered his eyes and was purposefully speaking in a thicker accent now. She stopped giggling and hit his arm gently. "Stop it."

He laughed. "Well I will tell you that I enjoy your company. I have enjoyed our sessions and that I had been thinking I would miss you. I am glad you are here tonight. I look forward to you coming to my home for dinner."

"I have not agreed to that yet."

"You will. I can be quite persistent." She had no doubt of that. "Tell me something about yourself, you know so much about me. I have assumed you are not married as you don't have a ring. Are you seeing someone?"

She laughed. "No. Not married. Single as single can be. Married to my work."

"Ahhh a workaholic. So what does Alana Bloom do when she isn't working herself ragged?"

"Well I like old movies, Cary Grant is a favourite. I enjoy crime novels and walking around markets on a Sunday in search of old books." She sounded like a bad singles ad. She needed to get more of a life.

"I figured you for a Cary Grant fan. Not the crime novels though. Don't you get enough of that at work?"

"I know but in fiction it's different there is always a reason, an answer in life that's rarely the case."

"You enjoy the comfort in a wrapped up story, a perfect parcel of motive and opportunity."

"Yes I suppose I do."

"What about your childhood? Was it happy or tragically sad?"

"Happy actually quite carefree. Nothing much to find there."

"No inner turmoil from a childhood of sadness and pain?"

"No. My inner turmoil is entirely self created in adulthood." She laughed and poured them more tequila. "Failed relationships and bad choices, too much work not enough play. All the usual."

"A common modern problem."

It was getting dark so he slowly and carefully got up and turned on the outside light of the shop, he wedged the door open and put on some lamps too. Then he decided to go and get the

gramophone and move it to the front of the shop, he put on Van Morrison which he knew Alana would love. She clapped and shouted her approval. That was when she got up and grabbed his hand, dragged him outside and they started to dance in the moonlight.

One of her hands on his shoulder and one around his very firm waist and she was soon being whisked around the street. It didn't surprise her he was a good dancer. He moved with such precision normally. She laughed and he dipped her, her hair falling behind her, he thought her skin looked luminous in this light. She thought he was the strongest man she had ever been held by yet he moved her lightly and delicately as if he wanted to protect her. The next song that came on was slower she found herself leaning on him and he gently spun her in large, slow circles. She could hear his heartbeat slow and steady as the music played around them. She closed her eyes and let him lead. He put his chin on the top of her head, she had kicked her shoes off and was in her bare feet so was even smaller than normal, he could smell her hair all delicate flowers. He found he was smiling.

"Alana." His voice soft.

"Hmmm." She tilted her head up to look at him looking down at her. "Yes."

"Thank you." He kissed the top of her head. They both continued to dance even after the needle slipped the record and they heard nothing but white noise and the starlight.

He had left his shop late, later than his usual time. He was working on a special commission of an antique watch, it was a present the client intended on giving his son, an heirloom in the making. It had taken months to track and down weeks to finally finish. He was so proud of the final product, he wanted to take some pictures for his records. He had left his camera at home, he had been restoring an old grandfather clock and was documenting the process he had also needed to send off picture of parts which needed replacing to send to various dealers.

He left the shop, he had the watch in a cloth bag in his satchel which also contained the weeks takings. He didn't usually keep a lot of cash on the premises, most of his clients paid in wire transfers. The amount he usually charged not being easily available in cash by most. This week had been an exception, a woman had purchased one of his refurbished pocket watches and paid cash as she didn't want her husband to know, it was a surprise for Christmas.

So he had the watch and \$3000 dollars in cash in his bag. He had put the alarm on and was closing the door, he had put the bag down by his feet as he used the many keys he had. He was on the third deadlock when he felt someone behind him. He turned and saw the man lurking in shadows. He finished locking the door and put the keys in between his knuckles

knowing he'd have to walk past the man with his bag to get to his car. He didn't necessarily anticipate any trouble, he had never had any trouble before.

He felt a presence and a whoosh of air that implied the man had raised his arm and was now suddenly very close behind him, he sensed the man was holding something in his hand. He managed to duck to the left and narrowly missed the blow but he had been caught off balance and fell landing on his side. He lunged and punched the guy in face, the keys made contact through the man's cheek ripping the flesh.

He had pulled the keys down once he realised they had punctured the man's cheek, drawing a deep cut in the flesh. He then managed to punch the man in the stomach winding him. The man then head butted him and this was when things were blurry. They struggled for a time and he was hit a few more times in the ribs. He thinks he kneed the man in the groin, winding him further. It was then he realised the man had a gun, he felt it pushed into his ribs. The man told him to open then shop back up. He did, the man told him to turn off the alarm, he did. He was aware of the man pointing the gun at his back the entire time he did this. The man then told him to lock them in. Which he did. Gun still pointed at his back.

The man hit him in the back of the head with the gun and he fell to the ground. The next thing he remembers is waking up with blood trickling down his head into his eye, hands tied with a cable tie behind his back to the radiator by the door he was propped up against. His tie had been taken off him and used as a gag around his mouth. He couldn't see very well as he had blood in his eyes and his head hurt a lot. His ribs also hurt and he was sat in awkward position.

The man noticed he was awake and pointed the gun at him again, he remembers turning his cheek and closing his eyes at the sight of it. The man had only turned on one of the small lamps. He realised the man was trying to gain access to the safe. He had trashed the rest of the shop and put everything that was left out in a bag.

The man walked up to him and pressed the gun painfully into the side of his face. He asked for the safe combination. He then removed the gag and asked again. He had given him the code and the man hit him again and then went to the safe and opened it. He took out everything he had but noticed the lack of cash. The man then threatened him again. He told him there was money in his bag. He took that.

He was not sure how long he was held there, the man did a thorough search of his shop, stopping occasionally to threaten or to hit him. He lost consciousness a couple of times he thinks but he wasn't sure. He had been slowly and carefully rubbing the cable tie against the metal of the radiator trying to weaken it. Eventually he had some success and when the man's back was turned he found he had released himself. He looked around for a weapon on some kind. The keys to the door were still in the lock. He waited until then man had his back turned inspecting the bureau in the back room, he slowly and carefully got up, removed the keys from the door, he slipped his shoes off and made his way quickly and quietly to the back

room. He lunged at the man, managed to knock the gun out of the man's hand, he then started stabbing at the man's neck with the keys. They struggled until he was hit to the floor and then he grabbed the gun and fired twice he thinks maybe more. He vaguely remembers pressing the panic button. He then passed out for a while. He woke up in the back of an ambulance.

The pictures told the gruesome story too. The man who had attacked Hannibal had multiple deep stab wounds to his neck, a large gash on his cheek. He had been shot three times, square in the chest. It was a bloody mess. Hannibal himself had two broken ribs, a fractured jaw, a severe concussion, numerous contusions and yet somehow had managed to overpower his attacker using nothing but a set of keys. Will had many questions. He closed his eyes and let the pendulum swing over Hannibal's version of events. It all fitted. The question the police asked, why didn't you just run? You got free you could have opened the door and ran, why didn't you? Hannibal said he wasn't sure, he guessed just adrenaline, he was worried the man would kill him, he had seen his face.

Will knew, logically, Hannibal was right. This man was a murderer. He would have killed Hannibal. Something didn't sit right though with Will and he couldn't put his finger on what. Maybe he didn't want to.

Hannibal pulled up at Will's house in his Bentley, the small yellow clapboard house with its wraparound porch was very lovely. He heard the barking as he turned the car off and got out. Will then appeared from the front door and his seven dogs came bounding down the steps to sniff Hannibal. Will called them back and they went about sniffing the front garden, except one who had the most extraordinary fluffy tail, that one stayed right next to Will.

"Hi." Will spoke with a slight nervousness.

"Hello."

"Please come in, I made coffee." Will turned and the dog that was at his heels followed him closely inside as did Hannibal.

Will's house was small but very cosy, there were many dog beds, a small desk where he made his lures, odd assortments of furniture and books lined the walls. His kitchen was small but practical. Hannibal watched as Will found them mugs and poured them coffee.

"So have you ever fished before?" Will asked.

"No. I am completely in your hands." Ah that glorious blush it was beautiful.

"Well its a relatively simple concept. I am sure you will get the hang of it."

It was a beautiful day, clear and crisp with a bright blue sky and a chill to the air. It smelled like fall. It was Will's favourite type of day. They took all the gear down to the river, Hannibal was borrowing waders and a rod from Will. He refused the hat which made Will a little sad, however the sight of Hannibal in waders was as funny as he had imagined and he tried not to laugh.

They carefully made their way into the water and Will showed Hannibal how to cast the line. The arch of the fishing line whirring through the air and the soft splash as it hit the water. Hannibal noted and approved of the smooth movement of Will's body as he did this. He looked so natural and comfortable. After a few false starts Hannibal got the hang of it and they stood next to each other in comfortable harmony enjoying the scene.

Will had read the police report and he didn't know whether he should tell Hannibal. He knew Alana would kill him when she found out. He had been intrigued, he couldn't help it. Watching Hannibal now casting a line like he had been born to it, Will couldn't imagine him that night covered in blood some of it his own and some of it his attackers. Lunging across his shop and stabbing a man repeatedly with force.

Hannibal sensed a change in Will as if his calm had suddenly changed into anxiety. "Are you alright Will?" He turned to look at Will who was looking at him with a pained expression on his face.

"I have a confession to make." Hannibal raised an eyebrow, of course he should have known Will had read the police report.

"You read the police report." Hannibal's tone gave nothing away.

"Yes."

"And?" Again with that flat tone.

"I'm sorry I was intrigued. I know I shouldn't have. I just wanted to know how bad it was. You don't seem like the sort of person who would be easily rattled. You were hurt much more physically than you said."

"Yes."

"You still managed to overpower him."

"Yes." Will would have to ask him outright, he would not give it to him easily. He held his gaze.

"Why didn't you run?"

"He had held me for hours. Beating me until I lost consciousness more than once. He had robbed me and destroyed my shop. He had done all of this without disguising his face. I had seen his face clearly, I had seen the enjoyment he obtained in overpowering and beating me. I knew he would kill me before he left. Even if I had managed to slip out of the door there was no guarantee he wouldn't have heard me leave and chased after me. He still had the gun. I felt I had no choice but to attempt to disarm him." This was what he had told the police.

Will was looking at him, his eyes seeing straight through him. "That's not why, that's not why you killed him, because you thought he was going to kill you. He was, I agree, going to kill you but that's not why you attacked him." Will's voice was steady, the air around them had suddenly become very quiet.

"You used your pendulum skill on me." Hannibal was taken aback. He somehow hadn't expected Will to do that, perhaps he didn't truly believe Alana when she said he could see things, put things together in ways others couldn't.

"Yes."

"So why do you think I attacked him."

Will waited a moment deciding whether to push further or not. "Because you wanted to. As you said he had hurt you, ransacked your shop. You had a choice to run or hurt him. You decided to hurt him."

"It might be argued that decision kept me alive."

"I never said it didn't. I just want you to know that I see what happened. You snapped." Will looked away again flicking his line over his head and back. Hannibal just stared at him. "It's okay."

Hannibal looked away watching the water in the river run over their feet. It was his turn to be caught off guard, his eyes had filled with tears he wasn't sure when this had happened. Will didn't acknowledge it, he must have seen it. They stood there in silence while the tears streamed down Hannibal's face. No one had ever seen him so completely as Will had in that moment. Not even Alana, she had never guessed at his secret. She had taken everything he had said as the truth. There was just one secret that was left which he knew Will knew. He had wanted to kill his attacker, he had wanted to the entire time. He had also enjoyed it. He had enjoyed sinking the keys into his flesh, he had enjoyed seeing the impact of the bullets in his chest. He hadn't admitted it to himself not fully until that moment.

"It's okay." Will repeated.

They had ended up catching a few fish which Will had put in the cooler box. They removed their waders and sat on the chairs they had brought down with them drinking some beer. Will assumed Hannibal didn't drink beer but didn't have anything else. Hannibal said he did on occasion and this seemed like a fitting time as any.

"Thank you Will."

"For what?"

"For the lesson and for the company." Also for the insights, Hannibal thought but didn't say.

"My pleasure."

"My grandfather clock stopped after you left the other night." He had to take the front off and clean it to get it to work again.

"You still think I make clocks stop?" Will laughed at this, he was not convinced. His fathers watch was still working.

"A strange coincidence perhaps?" Hannibal smiled as he sipped his beer, looking out of the side of his eyes at Will who looked perplexed.

"Perhaps. I mean you must have had clocks and watches stop before."

"Not these particular ones. They are all ones I have refurbished personally and looked after. They have been keeping perfect time for years. The grandfather clock is especially reliable." Part of him knew it was ridiculous but loved to tease Will nonetheless, however he hadn't worn a watch today and not just because he didn't want to lose it in the the river.

Will looked at him, Hannibal had rolled his sleeves up, Will eyed his wrist and laughed. "You didn't wear a watch today."

"Well I didn't want to lose it in the river."

"Yeah right. You didn't want me to break another watch!" Will laughed, his eyes lingering over Hannibal's forearms.

"Well I did lose an afternoon fixing the grandfather clock so..."

"I'm not apologising! I think it's just coincidence." Will didn't though ever since Hannibal had mentioned it and he realised the guys at the lab only used the boards for him, it had been weighing on his mind a bit. It was one of those things that once he noticed it seemed like it was everywhere. Only the other day he had come into the lab and they were all looking and cooing over a new piece of equipment some Electrostatic Detection Device, they had all but herded him out when they saw him.

"Really?" Hannibal knew he'd rattled Will and it was so amusing. "You haven't noticed anything else?" He was attempting nonchalance again and it was infuriating to Will.

"Okay maybe I have noticed people don't like me being around their electronics. That does not validate your theory just that people are as crazy as you are."

Hannibal laughed. "Is that your professional opinion?"

Will became very flustered he hadn't meant it like that oh curse him and his foot in mouth. "I didn't mean it like that sorry, I don't mean you are crazy."

He really did look adorable when he back peddled. "No offence taken." Hannibal held up his hand and Will relaxed a little. "What have you noticed?"

"When I went down to the lab they had a new piece of equipment and they were all looking

at it and getting excited and then the moment they saw me coming they basically ushered me out of there. When I went back later it had been moved to the corner. They also use physical boards instead of the screens, which now I think about it is more work as they have to print it all out and stick it up there. They also seem to make sure I only stand in one area away from the equipment." Will's tone became more irritable as he described this. Hannibal couldn't help but laugh, the image of poor Will being herded around by people in lab coats while discussing what kind of crazy Murderer they were dealing with was hilarious. "It's not funny. It's actually very unprofessional when I think about it. I may bring it up with Jack."

Except Will had also realised that Jack does a similar thing, his computer is never on when Will is scheduled to meet with him, he also prints everything out, he also uses a board instead of the screen in his office. Will scrunched up his face at that realisation.

Hannibal laughed harder. "Jack does it too." This was hilarious. How had Will never noticed this behaviour before? He was suppose to be a profiler.

"It is not funny. Its not true I mean how can a person interfere with electronics. It makes no sense. Also clocks and electronics and two different things. You of all people should know that." He was getting genuinely annoyed now, especially as Hannibal was not even attempting to hide his amusement. Will didn't want to admit he enjoyed the sight and sound of Hannibal laughing.

"Magnetic fields affect both." Hannibal managed between laughs.

"It's ridiculous. I do not break clocks and computers." He was starting to think differently though, he did go through laptops at an alarming rate.

"What about your students? I heard most students bring laptops or tablets to class to take notes these days. Do yours?" Will gave him a stern look and Hannibal laughed again. "Your students too! They make handwritten notes then have to type them up! How old school of them! Is this something they do for all classes or just yours?"

Will had no idea but he suspected not. He would ask Alana.

"Hmmm." Was all Will could manage.

"My dear Will for someone who spends his time observing the minutiae of others you really pay very little attention to yourself. It's very refreshing." Hannibal clinked his beer bottle against Will's.

"Well I am not convinced. Anyway isn't this going to become a problem if you want to keep

hanging out with me?" *Did he just say 'hanging out with me', smooth Will, smooth.* "I mean if you want to..."

"Yes I do." Hannibal said simply. "I am sure I will adjust or my clocks will." He laughed again and Will realised that he was smiling despite himself.

They had made their way back to Will's house, while Will tidied away all the gear and hung up the waders, Hannibal went to his car and retrieved the box of ingredients he had brought with him. He was gutting the fish as Will reappeared.

"What if we hadn't caught anything." Will said going to the fridge for another beer, offering one to Hannibal which he took.

"I had complete faith in your fishing abilities."

Will laughed. "Anything I can do to help?"

"Do you own a sauté pan?"

"Hmmm yes I think so." It had been so long since he had cooked. He rooted around in the cupboards for a while and eventually found one, brandishing it victoriously he gave it to Hannibal.

"Thank you."

"Anything else?"

"No I think I have everything I need."

Will was looking through the box of ingredients and implements intrigued. Eventually he sat at the table and watched Hannibal cook, it was a hypnotic. The focus and precision of his movements were so graceful. He thought about Alana and Hannibal dancing together, he imagined Hannibal to be a good dancer. He was again seized by an almost feeling of jealousy which he ignored.

"We are almost done here Will. Would you be so kind as to get some cutlery and plates for me."

Startled out of his revelry he bolted up and went about finding them plates. Hannibal was stood in front on the cutlery drawer and so Will almost bumped into him getting them knives and forks. They both danced around each other in silence as Hannibal plated up their meal. Sitting opposite each other they began to eat.

"This is delicious Hannibal." When will cooked the fish he caught it never tasted as good.

"Thank you."

"So what are you working on at the moment? Have you finished the pocket watch?"

"Yes actually I finished it before I started on your fathers watch."

"Are you going to sell it?"

"I will add it to my collection at the shop. If the right owner comes along then perhaps."

"You sound like you would be re-homing rather than selling. Is that what it feels like when you re build something and sell it?"

"I put a lot of time into my work so I like to know it's appreciated. It's a silly thing really."

"Not at all. I understand, they become a part of you."

"Yes I suppose they do. No actually at the moment I have not started on anything new." He had commissions he had been offered which he knew he should get back to and officially accept. He had just been so distracted lately. Also he had needed to fix all the clocks Will had inadvertently broken, which took time.

"I guess that's the joy of being your own boss you can decide when you want to work." Will envied that, part of him would love to just fix boat motors all day long. As Hannibal had said he longed for a simpler life.

"Yes I suppose. It can have its drawbacks, working and living alone." Before the attack he had never felt alone, he had enjoyed his solitude at work and spent time socialising with his

many friends. He would go to the opera or theatre most weeks. He couldn't remember the last time he went, the invites had stopped coming.

"You get lonely." Will's tone was not pitying which he appreciated, just a statement of fact.

"Yes." It was a relief to admit it to someone. "I used to spend a lot of time with other people going to the opera and theatre but since my attack it's been harder. The first few months I could barely leave the house. Now I have been living what amounts to my normal life again I feel I have no taste for crowds anymore."

"Perhaps it is the type of people in the crowds rather than the crowds themselves." Will had imagined what Hannibal's previous friends would have been like. It made sense that in aftermath of trauma he would seek out more grounding presences like Alana, like him.

"Yes perhaps I need to find a different crowd." He smiled at Will.

"Alana is a good place to start." Will meant it she was always a calming influence on him, she teased him but she also cared and was genuine a rare trait.

"Indeed she is." Hannibal smiled and sipped his beer. No doubt she will be calling him tomorrow to check in.

"Do you ever get lonely Will?" Hannibal realised he hadn't actually asked Will if he had anyone in his life, he had just assumed not perhaps because Alana hadn't mentioned it.

"With seven dogs very rarely. It's probably why I have them. I have always found dogs much easier company than humans. Less complicated. Winston rarely leaves my side." He patted the head of the fluffy tailed dog who was as they ate snoozing on Will's feet.

"Yes I noticed." Even when they were fishing Winston was never far away sat by the chairs watching.

"They are all quite clingy to me but Winston is always just there."

"It must be nice to come home to such simple unconditional love after a day of looking at what you do."

"They are a bit like my therapy pack."

"I'm not sure I could do what you and Alana do. I admire it but I am not sure I would have the stomach for it." Reliving his own trauma was enough he couldn't imagine reliving others.

Will sensed a growing melancholy in Hannibal and decided to change the subject. "What music did you and Alana dance to that night?" He had been fixated, he knew that was the term, with the idea of them dancing. He had such a perfect image of it in his head...which he hated.

"I believe it was Van Morrison. I seem to remember her singing it as she left. She has a surprisingly good voice." Hannibal had told her that at the time and she had laughed. Hannibal realised that Will was jealous. *How glorious*, he thought. "What kind of music do you dance to?"

"I don't dance."

"Everyone dances. You must have one song that makes you want to dance when you hear it."

"Do you?"

"I asked first Will, no answering questions with questions." He smirked and Will's blush was coming back it was almost at his ears. "What music do you play when you are alone and need to be uplifted?"

"I like the Rolling Stones." Will stood up and began clearing their plates eager to avoid this discussion with Hannibal who seemed to be doing that thing where he took great enjoyment in making Will feel incredibly uncomfortable. Hannibal stood up and attempted to help but was shooed away by Will. "You cooked please let me clean up."

Hannibal left him to it and wandered to Will's lounge. He could see Will also had an old record player, he looked through the records underneath. He found the perfect one. He took it out of the sleeve, opened the plastic top of the record player, lifted the needle and placed the record on the turntable and replaced the needle in what he thought was the correct spot. He pressed the power button and the sound began to flow out. The song Wild Wild Horses began to echo through the house and brought Will out to the lounge.

Hannibal turned to face him and was smiling. Will looked at him confused. How did he

know? How did he know that was the song he loved the most? Who was this improbable man? He started to laugh and Hannibal held out his hand. Will stopped laughing he wanted to run away. Hannibal sensed it and closed the distance between them. He held one arm out and the other he scooped underneath Will's arm, he then waited for Will to take his hand. "Do you mind if I lead?" Hannibal's accent suddenly seemed heavier and his eyes more intense.

"Hannibal.." before Will could finish Hannibal lowered his arm and grabbed Will's hand, lifting both their arms up.

"Follow me. It's not hard this is a slow one." Hannibal began to very slowly lead Will around the cramped space of his lounge.

Will easily followed as it was a slow song and Hannibal was a very good dancer. All thoughts left Will as he was so close to Hannibal he could smell the fresh air and river on his skin. He couldn't look up at him his eyes were just too close, so Will stared at Hannibal's neck instead, the muscles and sinews. Time seemed to stop as they danced around the room together.

Eventually the song ended and they parted. Hannibal let Will go and went to stop the music. Will followed close behind him and put his hand on Hannibal's. "Leave it." Hannibal's smile made Will's stomach flip.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you much for all the kudos and comments so far. This has been a joy to write. There will be more.

Any feedback is so lovingly received and warms my cold cold heart more than you know. Xxx

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

There is an actual plot developing now! Who knew?

Alana and Margot get closer but Margot has a surprise.

Jack is suspicious.

Hannibal and Will get closer....

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

He had accepted a commission on building a new but vintage style watch, something made from old parts but completely unique. This was his speciality, he would design something new for each customer who could afford such a specific request. It was a partnership between him and the client, he had to understand their taste and they had to understand his artistry. He would show them examples of his previous accomplishments, he kept meticulous records of these, they would decide what they liked and he would sketch out a design.

The sketches themselves were works of art, they were very precise and included details of the inside workings of the watch. He would spend hours drawing them all to scale. He would draw every cog, screw and element of machinery. When he was finished he would be intimately acquainted with every aspect of the design, finding he would dream about it for days. The preparation, research and design for these pieces would take months, careful not to rush them. The client would be called at various stages for consultation and then he would adjust for their tastes.

The leather strap was also always an important choice. He had a catalogue of different leathers, he would hand cut and sew these himself also. He had specific equipment for it. The catalogues for the different leathers and suedes he had were all bound together in large black binders kept on the shelves in the back. All of it expensive and exclusive. He had collated an amazing array of contacts and suppliers from all over the world who he could call on for any request. These contacts were kept in a book which he kept in his safe. All handwritten in his sloping script.

He was sketching one of these designs at his desk in the back room. He had his favourite good quality drawing paper and very sharp drawing pencils made of a lighter charcoal and graphite mix, he had a scalpel for sharpening as he found it was the most effective tool for achieving a sharp point essential for the detailed work. He had Mozart playing again, but he had the Rolling Stones in his head. Had done for days. He could not concentrate.

He was trying to focus his mind on his task. Imagining all the small pieces of this watch, what they looked like, the size and weight of them, how they would fit together. Instead he kept imagining what Will looked like, the shape of his shoulders as he cast a line, the tightness of his mouth when he was upset or thinking, the weight and shape of Will's hand as he had placed it on his so gently, how his and Will's mouths might fit together in a kiss.

He sighed and tried to force these thoughts from his mind. Of course the moment you attempted not to think about something it was all you could think about. He sighed, put the pencil down and leant back in his chair rubbing his eyes. He didn't need this right now. He needed to concentrate. He wondered what Will was doing...

Will was sat at his desk too, reading assignments. Trying not to think about the fact that other professors asked their students to hand their assignments in electronically, he still handed them in to him on paper. He preferred it that way, at least that's what he told himself. He was reading the work of some of the best up and coming minds of a generation. It wasn't easy getting into the academy, most didn't even complete the programme. These were intelligent and accomplished young people.

Yet they all bored him. They were all boring. They were all stupid and naive and stupid again. He felt contempt for them, he shouldn't, but he did. A large helping of contempt. He wished he was fishing, then he thought no, he wished he was watching Hannibal cook. He still had Rolling Stones in his head, had done for days. He needed to stop thinking about Hannibal.

He sighed and leant back in his chair, removing his glasses and rubbing the bridge of his nose.

"Will?" Alana's voice interrupted his melancholy. She strode into his classroom with her usual purpose. She walked around to his side of the desk and perched on the edge. "What ya doing?"

"Am I the only lecturer here that asks for or is given paper copies of assignments?" He asked.

She paused, she was pausing to figure out how to answer, Will thought, she thinks it too.

"I'm not sure." Was what she settled on. "Why?" Forced innocence a tone she was far too comfortable with.

"Do people think I...?" This was too ridiculous a conversation.

"What?" Had he actually finally realised?

"Just something Hannibal mentioned." Alana noticed the attempt at nonchalance.

"What did he mention?" Gods now she was doing it.

Will smirked at her. "He just has a theory."

"A theory?"

"He thinks that I or at least people might think I interfere with electronics and clocks. He thinks I broke three of his clocks. He thinks that's why my dad's watch won't keep time." It was ridiculous and even more so saying out loud.

"Interesting. Which clocks?"

"What?!"

"Which clocks does he think you broke?"

"Does it matter? Just two in his shop and he mentioned a grandfather clock in his hallway at his home."

Alana's hand flew to her mouth and she gasped. "No not the grandfather clock! Oh my god Will! He spent months refurbishing that. It's his favourite piece!"

"You believe this? You think I can break something just by standing near it?" This was insane. She was a scientist.

"I mean you must have noticed it. The effect you sometimes have?"

"No. I mean it's one of those things since he mentioned it I have started to think of things, like in the lab. But I mean it's not actually.... this is insane."

"Yeah the lab guys asked Jack if they could meet with you elsewhere. Every time you come down after you leave they have issues it's why they switched to the boards." Alana added sheepishly.

"This is ridiculous." He was starting to get genuinely annoyed now. Then he remembered Hannibal's laugh and smiled and looked away.

Alana eyed him suspiciously. "Will?"

He looked back at her purposefully not smiling. "It's not my fault anyway even if I do this, it's not on purpose!"

"We know we just didn't want to mention it because you might react, well like you this..." he was still suppressing a smile. "How was fishing?"

"It was good. Thank you."

"How was Hannibal?"

"Not bad he caught one, he took to it quickly."

"That's not what I meant. How was spending time with him?"

"Good."

"Good?" Will just nodded at Alana in reply and started to busy himself with the papers on his desk to avoid her gaze. "Why are you smiling?"

"I'm not." He could feel the smile, though, widening into a grin.

"What happened?" Alana was breathless with excitement at this smiling Will.

"Nothing. We fished, he cooked the fish, we ate, we... listened to music and then he left." That dance flashed across his mind again, the hands, the closeness, being lead around a room with confidence and surety.

"You listened to music?" Alana was sceptical.

"Yes."

"Nothing else?"

"No." He wanted to keep this memory between them for a while longer, it felt like a secret between them and he found he liked the idea of that.

"Hmmm" Alana was unconvinced and she knew she wouldn't get anything out of Hannibal. "Are you seeing him again?"

"Well I guess it depends whether he wants to as I break all his clocks."

She laughed. "If he forgave you for the grandfather clock, his pride and joy, then I think you are going to be okay."

"Is it really that important to him? That clock?" Will suddenly felt bad.

"He spent months just trying to find the parts for it. Putting it together and restoring it took him over a year. It was around the time he was attacked. I think it became a kind of therapy for him, especially during the time he couldn't leave the house."

Will flinched a little at the mention of the attack and Alana noticed it. "Will? Did you talk to him about it? The attack?"

"A little he brought up at dinner and then we spoke a bit more about it when we were fishing." He wouldn't meet her gaze.

She looked at him and realised. "Please tell me you didn't?!"

"What?" Will tried to defiantly meet her gaze but his guilt shone through.

"You read the police report?!" She was disgusted with him, he could see the disappointment and rage building in her eyes. "That's so well rude, Will. That's private information. You had no right. If he wanted you to know the gory details he would have told you them."

"He made it sound a lot less than it was. I thought he was hiding something, I was intrigued. I told him though and I apologised."

"Wait did you use your skill?" Will didn't answer and then gently nodded. "Will! You had no right. I am surprised he didn't drown you in the river."

He probably thought about it Will mused. "Alana, look I know what I did was wrong but I told him and he is fine. There is no need to get angry."

"He may be okay with it but I'm not. You were completely out of order Will. It's a breach of trust, my trust too."

"I know I'm sorry, Alana, I am I know it was wrong."

"He was okay with it? That you looked?" Her voice had calmed a bit and she supposed if Hannibal had accepted it. It was good for him to be more open with people.

"Yes." Will put his hand on her arm. "I am sorry Alana, truly."

She nodded and let it drop. "Are you seeing him again?"

"I don't know. I got busy with work. I haven't messaged him." She rolled her eyes. "Okay okay I will."

She sighed. "Just be careful he has been through a lot and you both have a tendency to put up walls around yourself."

"I promise."

"Okay well I better go, Jack wanted to see me." She made a face and Will laughed. She leant over kissed his cheek briefly and then left.

Will pulled out his phone to message Hannibal and saw that he had beaten Will to it.

Trying to listen to Mozart all I can hear is the Rolling Stones. - H

Will smiled. - having a similar issue. No Mozart though just student papers. Where are you? - W

Will suddenly felt like he craved seeing Hannibal, he sighed and rubbed his face. What was he doing?

at the shop working on a new design. - H

Will looked at his Father's watch. You have got to be kidding me, he thought. It had stopped.

watch stopped again. Mind if I visit. - W.

He had already started packing up the papers when the reply came.

u never need to ask. - H

Will smiled again. - on my way. - W

Will appeared at Hannibal's shop an hour later. He hesitated at the door suddenly nervous. He tried the handle, it was open so he walked in.

"Hannibal?"

He appeared from behind the red curtain, the sight of him made Will feel a little dizzy. He was in his usual well tailored three piece suit, a dark blue with a light blue pinstripe, no jacket though and the sleeves of his crisp white shirt were rolled up revealing strong forearms, his deep mustard tie was loosened revealing more of his neck.

"Hi." Was all Will could manage.

"Hello Will." His voice slipped under Will's skin so completely it made him shiver.

Hannibal strode towards him. "So you have stopped your fathers watch again?" He reached out for Will's wrist, which he gently took and lifted it to inspect the watch. Will just let him do this. Hannibal didn't remove the watch he just inspected it while it was still on Will's wrist. His face was so close to Will's skin that could he feel Hannibal's breath, he realised he was biting his lower lip.

"I would suggest you remove it, re wind it and stay away from it for a while, it should re start with a break from you. If you like I can take it and replace the strap?" Hannibal still held Will's wrist while he was saying all this. He looked up at Will, face still close to Will's skin, those lips were so close, he wondered if Hannibal was going to kiss his wrist for a moment but as soon as the thought entered his head Hannibal straightened up, he still held Will's wrist though.

"Would you like me to take it?" He asked again.

"Yeah you could I did think I should change the strap. It's cracking and..." his voice trailed off as Hannibal's deft fingers from his other hand were now undoing the strap, while his other hand held Will's wrist. He just stared at them.

Once Hannibal had removed the watch he let go of Will's wrist. "I should have something similar to this, please come and have a look at the catalogues, you may see something else." Hannibal beckoned for Will to go through to the back. "Just let me lock the door so we are not disturbed."

Will turned and bolted the door for Hannibal. "Thank you."

Will faced him and found he was transfixed by the shape of Hannibal's lips. He could not stop his eyes lingering on them. Hannibal turned and drew the curtain back and made his way to the back room. Will took a deep breath and followed.

Hannibal was looking for the right catalogue amongst the many on the shelves. Will's eyes went to his desk where there was a half finished sketch for his new design. Will moved closer to take a look. It was beautiful the detail in it astounding. "This is beautiful."

Hannibal turned, "oh thank you. I always like to plan the details well, I find it ensures I am familiar with the design before I even start to look for parts."

"It's impressive." Will was still finding it hard to breathe with the feel of Hannibal on his skin still lingering.

Hannibal found the catalogue he was looking for, flipped through it. "Here, perfect match if you wanted the same."

Will turned and went over to where Hannibal was standing, he looked at the leather sample, Hannibal had put Will's watch over the sample so he could see. It was perfect. "That's amazing. Yes I think the same."

"I will order some tomorrow."

"Thank you." Hannibal then picked up the watch and rewound it. Will was again transfixed by the delicate movement of those hands. He saw Hannibal still wore no watch. Maybe he'd taken it off before Will came. "You can wear it if you want. I know you did before." This time it was Hannibal's turn to blush slightly.

"It was just to note when it lost time. I hope you didn't object."

"No. Of course not. Please, maybe you can help it keep time." Will smiled at Hannibal, taking the watch from him with one hand, he moved the other to grasp Hannibal's wrist and bring it closer to him. He then slowly, taking time to appreciate the feeling of Hannibal's skin and his exposed forearm, put the watch on him, doing the strap up. "It looks good on you." It took a large amount of self control from Will to not lick the skin of Hannibal's wrist. He reluctantly released Hannibal from his hold.

"If you insist." His accent seemed heavier all of a sudden and it made Will want to roll his eyes back in his head and moan while he just listened to Hannibal speak.

"You must let me pay you this time. For the leather and the time."

"Perhaps." Hannibal had become strangely monosyllabic and Will noticed he was looking at his lips and he subconsciously licked them.

"I insist." He heard himself say as Hannibal seemed to edge closer to him. Hannibal was standing so close to Will now that he could smell the expensive cologne he wore.

"What if I requested an exchange?" Hannibal's voice was low and his accent was heavy. Hannibal's hand made its way slowly to the back of Will's neck, fingers gripping his hair slightly.

Will stifled a moan, "an exchange?"

Hannibal was now so close to him, Will could see all the lines and scars on his face. Hannibal's eyes were fixated on Will's lips who had parted them slightly and was trying to remember to breathe.

"I would like to kiss you. I have for some time." This time Will couldn't help the moan that slipped out of his mouth.

"That seems inappropriate. To exchange a kiss for work." Will breathed out, his vision was getting blurry.

"A request then." Hannibal's lips were now almost brushing against Will's, his fingers were stroking the back of Will's neck so gently it caused Will to moan. "If you permit me."

Will wished he would just kiss him. Put him out of his misery. "What if it's not worth it?"

"Believe me it will be." Hannibal then so lightly, that if Will had not been so hyper sensitive he may have missed it, brushed his lips against Will's, licking his top lip. Another moan escaped Will's lips, Hannibal smiled and Will could feel the shape of it against his own mouth.

"Just one kiss?"

"Yes. For now. If you permit me?"

Will moaned. "I do. I permit you."

"To do what?"

Oh god this was the best kind of torture. "To kiss me. Please." If Will could have been aware of the pleading tone in his voice he may have been embarrassed, Hannibal moaned at the sound of it imagining all the different ways he could hear it again.

Hannibal very slowly pressed his lips against Will's, his hand on the back of Will's neck pulling him in closer. It was a slow kiss, a painfully slow kiss and Will moaned with need for more. Eventually Hannibal deepened the kiss and moved his other hand to the side of Will's face. Will brought his hands to Hannibal's lower back feeling the cold softness of the silk from the back of his waistcoat. He longed to slip his hands under the layers of clothes. The weight of Will's hands on his back made Hannibal kiss him more aggressively. Will lost all sense of time and place.

Eventually Hannibal parted from him, his lips reddened, Will opened his eyes, Hannibal still held Will at the back of his neck and the side of his face. His thumb rubbing lazy circles on Will's cheek. He smiled. "I have wanted to do that ever since you appeared in my shop the second time."

Will laughed. "Not the first time though."

Hannibal laughed and removed his hands from Will's face, Will's own hands dropped from Hannibal's back, grasping Hannibal's wrists. "No not the first time." Hannibal breathed.

Will lifted Hannibal's wrist to his mouth and licked the skin just under where his he had put his fathers watch. Will put his ear to the watch and heard it ticking. He turned Hannibal's wrist so he could see the face and laughed as he saw the second hand moving once more.

Alana had left Will to go and see Jack she did not know what he wanted but she had a bad feeling which she tried to push away. She knocked on his door and he beckoned her to sit down.

"Dr Bloom. How are you?" He was testing the waters with her. This didn't bode well.

"I am fine thank you." She sat down in one the of the chairs in front of Jack's desk, he remained in his chair. "How are you?"

"I am good. Although I hear Mr Graham may have started to realise the conspiracy surrounding him regarding his effect on technology. I had wondered how long it would take." Jack smiled.

"Yes I think he may. He doesn't believe it though. What is it you wanted Jack?" She was suspicious now.

"It's about Margot Verger."

"Jack she has been cleared. Her brothers death was an accident." She attempted to keep her tone less exasperated than she felt. She didn't want him to know she was seeing Margot. She was sure Will would not have told him and no one else knew. "She had nothing to gain from killing him. The fortune goes to a male heir not her. She is in a worse position now that she was when he was alive."

"Is she?" Jack handed her a file.

Alana took it and opened it. She flipped through it, a standard medical file then she noticed where it was from. "What does this mean?"

"Margot went to a fertility clinic before her brother died. She wanted to be artificially inseminated. They began all the necessary tests. Just after Mason's death she was inseminated with sperm. The reason she chose this clinic was because they offer PGD. She can guarantee the baby is a boy. Her recent visit there revealed she is pregnant probably with a boy. This means the fortune will go to her child, the money is held in trust for her and she can stay at the Verger Mansion and has access to the business." Jack watched Alana as she studied the file.

"That doesn't mean she killed him." She needed to stay calm, the whirr of thoughts currently going through her head were almost too much.

"No it doesn't but it gives her motive, more of a motive than disliking him. They had a tumultuous some might say abusive relationship he was very cruel to her. It is possible she wanted to kill him but didn't want to deal with financial consequences of his death, however if she was pregnant then those consequences would be lessened. It is also possible that Mason found out about her plan and she pre-empted his reaction and had him killed before he could harm her."

"You have no proof of any of this though?"

"No just speculation. I have asked for her to be brought in again for questioning however. I wanted you to be there."

She paused and looked at Jack, she needed to make a decision. She could hide her relationship from Jack at least for the time being but he would probably find out. Margot had not told her any of this so how could she trust her?

"I am not sure that would be appropriate." She said quietly.

"Why?" Jack's voice deepened when he knew he was about to be annoyed.

"I have been spending time with Margot outside of work. She is a friend." She put particular emphasis on friend and Jack rolled his eyes.

"Alana I cannot believe we are having this conversation. Again. Did you learn nothing from your friendship with Hannibal Lecter? Which I still disapprove of by the way."

"You didn't disapprove of him finding that watch for Bella last Christmas."

If anyone else had spoken to him like that he would have imploded but Alana was always an exception to him, he sighed. "Alana I just worry about you. You know that it was Hannibal's contacts that had that case dismissed anyone else would have been more thoroughly investigated. The argument of self defence was not strong in that case. The wounds could have been described as vicious."

"In your opinion. You saw how affected Hannibal was afterwards. He had PTSD, he didn't leave his house for six months. He is changed now, he is only just getting back on his feet. Anyway that is irrelevant we are not talking about Hannibal." How she was managing to stay calm she wasn't sure, she had such a sinking feeling in her stomach and her skin was burning.

"The point still remains that you should not be spending time with a murder suspect."

"She isn't. She was cleared and as far as I know still is. You have no proof."

"Did she tell you she was pregnant?"

"You can't ask me that and by the looks of this file she has only just found out herself." Alana thought back to the dinner at Hannibal's, Margot had been drinking that night. That was the last time she could remember seeing her drink. They had just met at Alana's home since...She hadn't given it much thought.

"I will take that as a no. Well if I can't have you in on the interview I will ask Will." Alana had hoped he would say that, Will would be in her corner.

"When is she coming in?"

"In about an hour I will go and ask Will now."

Alana wanted to object and say she would ask him but sensed she needed to stay away. She wanted to call Margot but realised that was a bad idea. "Can I observe?"

"Would I be able to stop you?"

She smiled. "No."

"Okay in an hour then. I'll go and talk to Will." Jack stood up leaving Alana sat reading Margot's file.

Will had left Hannibal in a daze after receiving the call from Jack about Margot. Hannibal had wanted to come and see Alana but Will had advised against it, plus he wasn't sure he could have gotten Hannibal into the building. He promised to call later and left. He made his way in a rush back to work. He went straight to the interview room where he found Jack just sitting down with Margot and her lawyer.

"Nice of you to join us Mr Graham." Jack said as he entered the room, Will gave a glance to the mirror knowing Alana would be watching, and sat down. Margot looked up at the mention of Will's name. "Miss Verger this is Will Graham he will be sitting in with us today if that is okay?"

Margot looked him up and down, noted the lack of a watch on his wrist and smiled. "Yes of course." Her voice was amused and Will wondered why.

"Why is this man present?" Margot's lawyer asked, a serious looking man who peered at everyone over half rimmed glasses.

"He is a profiler here at the academy I wanted his thoughts." Jack said evenly.

"Are you profiling Miss Verger?" The lawyer asked.

"It's fine." Margot said and the lawyer scribbled something on his pad of paper. Will was looking at Margot, she seemed calm and self assured. She had an easy smile and vulnerable beauty matched with a quiet intelligence that was enchanting. He could see why Alana liked her.

"Why are we here Mr Crawford?" The lawyer asked.

"It appears that Miss Verger has had a change in circumstance." Jack was using his carefully honed interrogation tone giving nothing away.

"What change would that be?" The lawyer asked.

"It appears that the money from her brothers death will be going to her now." When Jack said this Margot didn't even flinch. Will admired her more.

"Yes." The lawyer said.

"Could you explain to us why?" Jack asked.

"I would imagine that you already know the answer to that. Although how you obtained that information would be of interest to us." Margot's lawyer spoke with a practiced annoyance. Margot looked amused.

"Could you confirm the reason?" Will spoke this time, his tone soft and he spoke directly to Margot.

She smiled at Will and nodded. "I'm pregnant. With a son."

The lawyer sighed, "what does this have to do with why you called Miss Verger in?"

"This sudden change of circumstance is interesting. It perhaps shows a motive where there wasn't one before." Jack spoke to the lawyer, Will noticed how Margot's hands had moved to her stomach and she was smiling.

"I had been told I could not have children. My brothers, my family's previous doctors told me I couldn't have them. A few months before my brother died I discovered this was not the case."

"Miss Verger it may be better if you don't speak." The lawyer said.

"I have nothing to hide. I know it may seem like I have motive but I did not kill him. I assume nothing has changed in regards to the autopsy and coroners report?" Will realised that she was supremely confident for an innocent person, usually innocent people feel guilt at just being considered to be guilty. This was not the case for Margot or maybe she just hated her brother that much. Either way she was hiding something, Alana must have sensed it to by now.

"No we have no new evidence." Jack responded.

"So if Mason's death is still being ruled accidental then I don't understand why we are here?" Margot's lawyer was staring right at Jack.

"I just wanted to confirm your change in circumstances." Jack spoke with a slight amusement in his voice.

"This could not have been done over the phone?" The lawyer was getting more aggravated now.

"I like to see people in person." Jack always took a large amount of pleasure in annoying lawyers.

"Is there anything else?" The lawyer said starting to put his things away.

"How did you find out that your brother had been lying to?" Will asked Margot, entirely ignoring the lawyer.

"You don't need to answer that Miss Verger we may just leave." The lawyer said turning to her.

"No that's ok." She said meeting Will's open look. "A routine appointment with a doctor, I decided to see someone different from the family one. I mentioned I couldn't have children and they disagreed."

"Which Doctor?" Will asked.

"I can give you his details if you don't already have them?" She directed that at Jack.

"That would be appreciated Miss Verger." Even though Jack already had them. Margot opened her bag and took out a card which she handed to Jack.

"I have nothing to hide." She said smoothly, her eyes glancing to the mirror and then to Will.

"Thank you for coming in Miss Verger and congratulations." Will said genuinely.

"You know you are the first person to say that to me." Margot smiled. She then stood up and with the lawyer and left the room.

Once she had gone Jack looked at Will. "Well?"

Will sighed he would say she killed her brother and made it look like an accident as that is what he felt in his gut. He also knew the sort of man Mason Verger was and didn't feel a great amount of sympathy for him. He also knew Jack was like a dog with a bone when it came to his hunches. He also wanted to protect Alana.

"You don't have any new evidence against her?"

"No apart from the pregnancy."

"Which happened after his death technically."

"Technically. I am asking what you think."

"I think she may be capable but that doesn't mean she did anything. I don't even know the details of the case well. I can read the file if you like?"

"Yes. I think you will. You owe me for the Hannibal file."

Will swallowed. "How did you?"

"If someone looks up a case file I know about it. Why did you look it up?"

Will thought about the kiss he had just shared and the conversation he had while fishing. "I recently met him through Alana, he mentioned how they met and I was intrigued."

Jack raised an eyebrow. "Well. I'll get you the Mason Verger file."

"Fine." Will quickly took his cue to leave, he heard Jack chuckle as he left and he tried not to blush.

Alana caught Margot outside, Margot sent the lawyer away. Alana led her to a bench out of the way of prying eyes.

"Are you alright to be outside for a bit? It's not too cold?" Alana said her tone worried even though she was furious.

"Yes. Alana." They both sat. "Look I'm sorry I didn't tell you."

"When did you find out?" Alana couldn't look at her just yet.

"A few weeks. I didn't tell anyone. I didn't want to jinx it. I was going to tell you. I promise you." Margot reached out a hand and covered Alana's.

"You didn't even tell me you had gone for IVF." Alana looked down at Margot's hand but didn't remove it.

"I know but I didn't want to scare you. You and I, this is wasn't something I expected to happen. I just wanted the bubble to last a little longer. It was selfish I'm sorry."

"It's not just that Margot, you must know how this makes you look. Jack won't just drop this."

With her other hand Margot touched Alana under her chin and turned her head to face her. "I know. I've put you in an awful position and I'm sorry."

Alana tried not to notice she hadn't denied killing her brother. "Margot this is a very dangerous game you are playing." Alana saw the flash in Margot's eyes but she didn't look away.

"Are you still with me?" Margot asked tentatively.

Alana met her eyes and she knew she was, she knew she would follow this woman wherever she was going to take her. Alana closed the distance between them and kissed her, Margot moved her hand to Alana's hair.

Eventually they parted. "So how do you feel about children?" Margot asked still breathless.

Alana smiled. "Actually I always wanted children."

Margot beamed at her. "I am sorry. I should have told you. As I said I never expected you."

"That makes two of us." Alana kissed her again. They parted and Alana put her arm around Margot pulling her into an embrace. "Congratulations."

"It felt like Will was saying it for you when he said it. You were watching through the mirror?"

"Yes."

"I knew it, I mean I thought you were and then Will glanced at the mirror and I knew. He seems nice."

"Will?" Margot nodded, "yeah he is a good friend."

"I can see him and Hannibal together. They suit each other."

"I know I didn't at first but now I think about it I do to. Plus they are both acting like some lovesick teenagers at the moment it's hilarious."

Margot looked up at Alana. "I know how they feel." They both smiled.

"I can't believe you are having a baby." Alana was feeling like it was just sinking in, the rest of it she tried to push away for the moment. There would be time to sort that out.

"We. We are having a baby. If you want?" Margot's voice was so quiet and filled with hope Alana almost cried.

"We. I can't believe we are having a baby." Margot beamed again and kissed her.

She saw Margot to her car, she would be over later so they could talk more. First she had to see Will. She found Will waiting outside her office.

"Come in. I think have some beer somewhere. If you want?" Alana said closing the door and locking it behind them. She went to the mini fridge she kept in her office and pulled out two unmarked bottles, opened them and handed one to Will. "Hannibal's own brew I get my own batch."

He smiled and took a swig. "It's good."

"So I take it Jack wants you to read the file?" Alana took a large sip of her beer and flopped down on the sofa.

Will perched on her desk facing her. "Yes."

"Any initial thoughts?" Alana looked at him slightly despairing at the thought of the answer.

"I think you know. I think you share them."

"She wants us to raise the baby together, for me to be a part of it."

"Wow."

"I think I want that. With her."

"He has nothing on her, Jack. There is no evidence."

"Yet." Alana looked away.

"Yet. Maybe never."

"When you have read the file will you tell me?" She looked back and met his eyes. "Please? Just so I have warning." He nodded. "Thank you Will. Thank you for being so kind to her in the interview."

"Strange way to meet her. But I like her." Will smiled.

"She said the same."

"You might want to call Hannibal as well he was worried." Alana looked at him quizzically. "I was with him when Jack called me."

"You were?" Alana smiled.

"Yes." Will's smile broadened and he looked down at the floor then back up at Alana.

"You are blushing!" Alana laughed. "Something happened?!"

Will smiled and drank his beer. "Just call him he wanted to come down and I stopped him. He's worried about you."

"Oh I will don't worry. What happened though? He won't tell me." Alana leant forward. "Please come on it's been a hell of a day!"

"Fine. We kissed."

"Finally! And? How was it?" She was beaming at him and he found it annoying and endearing at the same time.

He thought, 'mind blowing', he said "good it was really good."

"No I need more than that Will come on. That's a serious blush you've got going on there. It must have been some kiss."

"Okay but please don't tell Hannibal I told you!"

"Cross my heart."

"It was probably the best kiss I have ever had." He hadn't actually realised it until he said it, everything about it had been so good.

"I am so happy Will. Seriously you both deserve some happiness."

"So do you Alana. I am happy for you. I think you'd make an amazing Mother." He did, she looked after everyone else so well. He could see it and the image made him smile.

"Thank you." She said and leant back, she breathed out a sigh. "Yeah. Wow."

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for all your lovely comments and kudos.

I hope you enjoy this chapter.

Feel free to find me on tumblr and have a chat.

Xxxxx

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Will reviews Margot's file but keeps getting distracted by thoughts of Hannibal who finds himself equally distracted.

Hannibal talks to Bedelia about his blossoming relationship with Will.

Alana worries about Margot.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

He had insisted on having that tank installed in his room with that thing, that eel. She had told him it was strange and probably not a good idea to have something like that in the house, in the floor. She had said to him, just have a normal aquarium built in one of the barns or one the many other rooms in the mansion. He had insisted it be in the floor in his bedroom.

It had always scared her, she never had much reason to go in there anyway but avoided it as much as she could regardless. She hated the thought of it, slithering away in there. How did he sleep? With that beast in the same room as him?! She should have known though, she supposed, that beasts attracted beasts. Each as fascinated by each other as they are by themselves.

She had come home late that night. She had been seeing friends in the city, the family driver had driven her back late, she wasn't sure what time. He would know, the driver, though. She had gone straight to her room. She hadn't looked in on Mason she never really did. She would always avoid him if she could. Tumultuous relationship.

She was having breakfast. Thinking it was strange she was there before him, he usually liked to be waiting there every morning with a taunting remark. That morning he wasn't. She was relieved if she was honest more than concerned. As she said tumultuous relationship.

Then the maid screamed. It was loud and high pitched. It had gone straight through her like glass through a wound. A cold feeling of dread had overcome her. She ran to Mason's room and found the maid still screaming. When the maid saw her she ran into her, covering her face against Margot's embrace. She saw blood and told the maid to call the police. Eventually the maid left to make the phone call. Margot entered the room.

The scene she was confronted with was like something from a horror movie. The blood was everywhere mixing with the water and the broken glass from the tank. The eel was still inside Mason, it was still alive as it was trying to eat its way out of Mason, it had made some of its

way, there was a hole through him but it was still eating and making Mason's body twitch as if it was alive. She knew he couldn't be.

She panicked. She supposed. She doesn't really remember. Just the twitching, the sickening twitching. She will never forget that as long as she lives. She went to the gun safe, she knew where it was because Mason had several around the house and she knew he had one in his room. She knew the combination they were all the same. Her birthday. He was strangely sentimental that way.

She loaded one of the shotguns and shot the eel, and well Mason, what was left of him. The twitching stopped. She may have thrown up. She doesn't remember it but she was told her vomit was found. She doesn't remember much after that. Just the police, the gun being taken from her, a blanket wrapped around her, being ushered away.

The pictures were gruesome, the eel had hollowed out most of Mason Verger's body, the shot gun blast had fractured both him and the eel. It was impossible to see if Mason had been alive when he fell into the the tank or if there had been some other injury as the blast from the gun had been fully destructive.

The report on the tank was inconclusive. It was impossible to tell if it had been broken prior to Mason falling, or if perhaps Mason's fall had caused it to break, or if it just broke by itself and Mason had not realised got up in the middle of the night and fallen. There was no way to tell. Margot had an alibi for the whole evening. Despite her strained relationship with Mason her whereabouts were accounted for. The driver had confirmed her story as had the friends she had seen. At the time there was no motive as she had lost more than she would have gained in her brothers death. Now there was the pregnancy and that changed things but still gave no definitive proof.

Will closed his eyes and started to let the pendulum swing over her version of events. It didn't fit. He knew it. He opened his eyes again, stopping his process, not wanting to follow it through. He could feel she had killed him, planned it meticulously. He couldn't say he blamed her. He could probably come up with proof if he let the pendulum swing fully but he couldn't quite bring himself too. Not yet anyway. He would let Jack and the team in the lab review it again first. He would talk to Alana again.

He took off his glasses and rubbed his eyes. His thoughts drifted to Hannibal, to kissing him in his shop specifically. His thoughts seemed to be permanently sliding there. The sound of his voice, the feel of his lips, the weight of his hands at the back at Will's neck. He sighed and tried to push the thought away, he couldn't afford to be distracted at the moment. He was worried enough about Alana being involved with some one potentially dangerous, he didn't need to worry about himself making the same mistake.

It was just that Hannibal seemed to see him, understand him. He understood Hannibal as well, that was the problem. He could feel the darkness in him, he was attracted to it, he felt it inside himself too. He was drawn to it and he was drawn to Hannibal. Alana and Jack always assumed he hated to look at the death and murder but did it because of the lives he saved. He

only admitted to himself in the dead of night that the reason was if he didn't look, he craved it. He needed to look, to feel that darkness surround him.

He shook his head to dispel these thoughts. This is why he should be alone. It was better to be alone.

Will knew despite his best efforts that the kiss had started a fall, one he was not coming back from. When he closed his eyes he saw Hannibal's eyes, he felt his lips and his hands and wanted more. He wanted Hannibal to follow him down into the darkness. He wanted Hannibal to be waiting for him at the end of the darkness. He wanted that more than he had ever wanted anything else.

He leant back in his chair and sighed, closing his eyes he conjured Hannibal. What he might be doing at this moment. His shop, his sanctuary. He had remade it into his sanctuary after it had been violated. It had been painstakingly and lovingly put back together just like one of his clocks. He would be sat there in the back at his desk drawing his design. There would be classical music playing with crackles from the records player. The light would be dim except for the desk lamp. His jacket would be carefully hung on the back of his chair, his tie and shirt loosened, sleeves rolled up.

He saw Hannibal, he watched him draw. He saw the shape his lips made when he concentrated. The way his hands moved over paper, creating the physical manifestation of Hannibal's thoughts. He heard the hum he made as he subconsciously heard the music he played. He saw the curve of his back as he sat, leant over his desk, the strain in the fabric of his waistcoat from his strong back muscles. The smudges of charcoal caught on his forearms, Will wanted to lick them. The way his hair fell over his face. The way the light from his desk lamp caught the silver in it...

"Will." He was startled by her voice, he opened his eyes unable to focus for a moment.

"Alana, hi." He said when his eyes refocused.

"Where were you?" She came and perched herself on the desk, just to the side of Will. He closed Margot's file and she pretended not to see him do it.

"Nowhere." He lied.

She sighed. "So what did you think? When you read the file? Honestly?"

He looked at her, he wasn't usually good with direct eye contact but with Alana it had always seemed easier. "I didn't use my skill. It didn't feel right, at least not until Jack can give me more evidence."

Alana wasn't stupid. Far from it. She also knew Will better than most did. She loved him more in that moment than she thought possible. She could see her own conflict reflected back at her and it hurt. "I know what that means." She simply stated.

He leant forward and touched her hand with his. She bit her lip to try and stop herself from crying and stared up at the ceiling. She couldn't meet those eyes. "It doesn't mean anything

Alana." He lied, again.

She managed to look at him again, tears were threatening to spill from her eyes. "Will." She spoke softly. "Don't lie to me."

"I'm not, Alana. It doesn't mean she did anything. I have no proof."

"Because you haven't looked. You know if you did you would find it."

"No. Not necessarily. Right now there is no need for me to look."

"That's not what Jack thinks." She was crying now, tears falling down her face and it broke Will to see her like that.

"I'm not Jack." He stood up and pulled her into an embrace while she sobbed on his shirt, he kissed the top of her head. "Alana. Have you spoken to her?"

She pulled back from Will and looked up at him, he slid one of his arms down to her hand and grasped it, with his other hand he gently pushed some hair out of her eyes.

"You mean have I asked her if she killed her brother?" Alana's broken smile made Will grimace. "No. Not directly."

"Do you want to?"

"Do I want to see her lie to me? Or worse not lie."

"Alana."

"I know how to pick them." She laughed and he smiled.

"You and me both." Will whispered, pulling her into a hug again.

"Hannibal is a good man Will."

"I know." He lied. "Do you know what you are going to do?"

"No." She had turned her head, the side of her face against the hollow of Will's shoulder, one of his hands in her hair and the other holding hers. "I think I do and then I see her and I suddenly have no idea."

Will smiled. "I know the feeling."

"Love's a bitch right?" Alana laughed.

"Yes. Yes it is." Will stroked her hair and allowed her to cry a little more. "Whatever you do I'll be here Alana as I suspect will Hannibal."

"I know. Thank you."

That kiss had been on his mind for the last few days. He got no further significant work on his sketch done. Instead he was listening to Mozart and staring at his phone hoping Will would call him. It was getting late, he should probably go home. Then it rang and he smiled.

"Will."

"Hello Hannibal. Sorry I meant to call it's been a busy few days. Did Alana call you?"

"Yes she did."

"Good. She told you? About her and Margot?" Will didn't want to go into specifics just in case.

Hannibal appreciated that Will guarded Alana's privacy and her friendship with Hannibal.

"Yes she did. It's an interesting turn of events. I hope it works out for them. How are you? Are you home?"

"Me too. Yes. Finally. Jack wanted me to review a file again, but eventually I had to get back for the dogs. Are you at the shop?"

Hannibal assumed the file he meant was Margot's but thought better of pushing it. "Yes still trying to work on the sketch but my mind keeps wandering."

Will laughed. "I know the feeling."

"I miss you. I wish you could have stayed that day in the shop." Hannibal leant back in his chair and sighed as he realised how true this was.

"I know I wish I could have too." Will was led on his bed and he sighed, scared as he realised how much he had never wanted to leave that shop.

"It was a good kiss."

Will laughed again and Hannibal felt like he could spend the rest of his life drawing out that laugh from Will. "It was."

Hannibal was looking at the watch, still on his wrist, it had not stopped. "Your watch is still going."

"You have a magic touch."

Hannibal smiled. "So do you." He thought about the way Will had licked his wrist and he wanted to moan.

"When can I see you?"

"Whenever you wish."

Will realised that Hannibal sounded even better over the phone. He was getting a bit hard just listening to that lilting voice. "Soon." He breathed out.

"What would you like to do when we see each other again?"

Will smiled and squirmed a little. "I imagine you have some ideas."

"Would you like to hear them?" Hannibal asked tentatively.

"Yes." Will breathed in reply, the memory of Hannibal's lips on his still felt physical to him, his lips were buzzing at the thought of it.

"I would like to stare at you, take all of you in with my eyes. I would slowly undress you."

"That's very presumptuous." Will said nervously.

"I can stop if you like." Hannibal smiled.

"No, please go on." Will was suddenly terrified Hannibal might stop.

"I would take my time, removing every item of clothing with care and precision. So I could see you slowly and remember."

"Do I get to undress you?" Will's voice was breathless at the thought.

"Later I would undress you first. I would want to appreciate the moment. Make it last."

"This seems very unfair."

"To who?"

Will laughed, "not sure!"

"I would want to memorise every line and dip of your skin. I would kiss you gently on the mouth and then make my way down your neck, across your shoulders, down your chest, taking time to taste each of your nipples. I would swipe my tongue around them and bite them softly until you moaned with need."

"You are very good at this."

Hannibal smiled. "Thank you, you inspire me."

"Do I? Please tell me more." Will was falling in love with Hannibal's voice, he was trying hard not to but he was nonetheless.

"I would savour every inch of your skin, tasting it with my tongue, licking every bead of sweat."

"I would be sweating in this scenario?"

"Only in a good way. In anticipation."

"Fuck okay that sounds good."

Hannibal realised he liked it when Will swore which was strange he normally hated cussing of any kind, he thought it unoriginal. "I would run my hands down your sides, running my fingernails lightly across the skin. I would find your hip bones with my mouth and hands, I would memorise them and how they felt under my fingers and tongue."

"Mmmm." A moan from Will and another smile from Hannibal who had settled further back in his seat, he leant his head back and closed his eyes imagining Will.

"I would run my tongue along your thighs, my hands following, gently scraping the skin. I would find my way back to your lips, I would place my mouth against yours to kiss you slowly and deliberately. I would savour every moment our tongues touched."

"Yes. Please." Will had closed his eyes and was using his vivid imagination to conjure up Hannibal feeling his tongue and hands on his skin.

"I would run one of my hands through your hair as I kissed you. I would use the other hand to pull you closer so that our bodies would slot against each other."

"Surely you should be naked at this point."

"So impatient."

The slightly admonishing tone in which Hannibal said that made Will want to be impertinent just so he could hear it again. "Fuck. Well yes I think if I was naked and you were clothed running your hands and mouth everywhere I would want you to be naked as well. So I could return the favour."

"Would you want me to undress? Or would you want to undress me?"

He really was good at this. "Mmmm I think I would watch you. I imagine it would be a performance I wouldn't want to miss."

Hannibal laughed softly and Will found the sound unbelievably erotic. "Perhaps. I think I would maybe want you to watch. Making you wait to touch me."

Will could imagine this scenario, the way Hannibal had made him wait to be kissed was clearly only the tip of the iceberg. "I am very impatient though. I might not be able to control myself."

"You will learn."

Oh god, Will thought, that commanding tone was tipping him over an edge. He wanted to hear what Hannibal sounded like when he lost control. He wanted to explore all the different ways he could take him apart. "Promise?"

"Promise and I always keep my promises."

"I like the sound of that." Will laughed.

"I like the sound of your laugh."

"I like the sound of your voice."

Hannibal smiled. "Just when I describe the things I would do to you if I was there or all the time?"

"All the time but particularly at this moment." Will paused for a moment. "I realise I don't know where your accent is from?"

"Originally I am from Lithuania but I have lived in many countries. Spoken many languages so it's a bit of a mix now."

Will was intrigued. "How many languages do you speak?" This means Hannibal could talk to him like this in more than one language the thought was definitely arousing.

Hannibal laughed knowing what Will was thinking. "Fluently I speak Lithuanian, English, Italian and French. I have a good amount of Spanish and Russian. I can also translate Latin and Ancient Greek."

"Wow. I can speak a bit of French and I have been told my grasp of the English language is pretty good."

Hannibal laughed. "I assume it's creole French you speak."

"Well Mr Lecter is that snobbery I detect in your voice? Maybe we should get back to the sex talk." Will laughed.

"It's Doctor actually."

"What?" Oh this man is ridiculous.

"I obtained my doctorate in fine art, engineering and philosophy. I am technically Dr Lecter."

"Yes because that's a perfectly normal combination of subjects." Will was hysterically laughing at this point.

"I do not see what is so funny." Hannibal was confused as to how they had gotten so off track.

"I'm sorry I have just never met anyone like you. Is there anything you are not good at?"

Hannibal had to think. "Keeping your attention apparently."

Will laughed harder at that. "I'm sorry I have totally ruined the moment haven't I?!"

"Well yes." Hannibal found Will's laugh contagious and joined him.

"Don't worry you have my attention Doctor Lecter."

Hannibal was pretty sure that being called Doctor had never sounded as sexy as it did when Will said it. "As you have mine Mr Graham."

Fuck, Will thought, I am so screwed.

She had debated whether she should see him. She knew where he lived from Alana who would look after his dogs on occasion. She knew that when Alana found out she had gone she would be furious. She couldn't help herself. She had to test the waters for herself. Alana trusts him, she trusted Alana but still it was an itch she just needed to scratch.

So she found herself outside of Will Graham's house on a Saturday afternoon. She was sat on his porch as he was not apparently in. His car was on the driveway but he was nowhere to be seen. It was a pleasant enough day, cold but clear, so she she waited. She dimly remember Alana saying he fished, the lack of dogs made her think maybe he was walking them. So she sat and waited. She gave herself an hour maximum. It had been two before he appeared with a pack of dogs, fishing gear and a cool box. He looked flushed from being outside, he looked content. Until he saw her.

"Margot." It was not a question just a statement.

"Hi Mr Graham." All the dogs except one swarmed around her as she stood up. She bent down to pet them all.

"Please call me Will. I hope you haven't been waiting long." He walked closer to her and called the dogs away and she stood up.

"A while but I was unannounced so I only have myself to blame." She smiled.

"Come in I will make us some tea you must be cold. Alana would not forgive me if you became ill waiting for me." She flinched at the name. "Of course she doesn't know you are here. Come in anyway."

"Thank you."

She followed Will and his many dogs up the steps into his house. He excused himself to get changed and Margot offered to make tea. The dogs milled around her while she waited for the water to boil, they were a lovely bunch of strays and she found herself softening for Will because of them.

"Careful if they sense you have a weakness for them they will never leave you alone." Will returned and they soon made their allegiance clear. He told them to go to their beds which they reluctantly but dutifully did.

"Sorry I appear to have gotten distracted by the pack and the tea has fallen by the wayside." Margot smiled at him.

"No problem. You've done the hard part." She laughed nervously as he busied himself making them tea. Once poured she warmed her hands around the mug. They had moved into the lounge and Will had put the fire on for her and she soon found herself warm and cozy once more, surrounded by snoozing dogs drinking sweet, hot tea.

"So Margot. To what do I owe this visit?" He was treading carefully.

"I wanted to thank you firstly for your kindness when I was interviewed and also your support to Alana."

"Both of which you do not need to thank me for. I was simply doing my job and Alana is a good friend." He wanted it make that clear.

"I know she is. That's why I wanted to make sure that you knew I care about her a lot. I wouldn't do anything to hurt her. I want her to be with me in this." She touched her stomach.

"Margot let's just be honest here. I can't tell you anything about the case."

She sighed and looked disappointed. Even though she knew he would say that. She perhaps thought he would give away more than he was, she couldn't tell if she thought she was guilty or not.

"I know. I guess I just wanted to see what you thought. You aren't going to tell me that either." Her hand absently went to scratch Buster's ear who was in the bed closest to her seat and he nuzzled her appreciatively, tail wagging.

"Margot all I can tell you is what you already know. There is no new evidence. Jack is suspicious because of the pregnancy but he has nothing concrete. He has asked me to review the case. I have no reason to suspect you and no new evidence to add." That was all he could tell her. He wanted to just tell her look I know but it's fine just don't hurt Alana, but he knew she would never hurt Alana. So what would be the point.

"I know perhaps you suspect me. I would too." She said this quietly and then looked at Will forcing him to meet her eyes. "You shouldn't. I didn't do anything wrong."

He noted that she did not say she was innocent. "I don't think you did Margot." They were silent for a moment and she smiled.

"I've taken up enough of your time Mr.." she stopped herself. "Will. I should go. Thank you for the tea."

He saw her out, after all the dogs had said goodbye too. Just as she reached her car, she hugged him and whispered in his ear "Hannibal and you make a good couple." He laughed and looked suitably abashed.

He watched her drive away from his porch and sighed.

"So you've met someone." She had noted the plainer watch and the distracted demeanour. He was giving off signals like a lovesick teenager.

"How did you?"

"I was trained to be observant Hannibal. I am a psychiatrist." Her tone was laden with a heavy amount of sarcasm which Hannibal usually enjoyed but today found it vaguely grating. Surely she should be happy that he has met someone. He wondered not for the first time why he kept coming back.

"Indeed. Well yes I have met someone."

"Who is...he?" He nodded at the correct pronoun. She wasn't sure he was gay she had assumed it but not confirmed it.

"A friend of Doctor Bloom actually, the psychiatrist I saw initially after the attack."

She sighed. Did he think she didn't know her patient files? "Is he a fellow psychiatrist?"

Hannibal laughed at the idea of dating a therapist. "No. Well in some ways. He is a profiler and lecturer at the FBI academy."

She looked at him without blinking for moment and sighed. For someone who was as remarkably intelligent as he undoubtedly was he really could be an idiot. "Am I to assume that as he works at the FBI he profiles murderers?"

"Yes. Serial killers."

It gets better, she thought. "Do you think it's wise to date someone in such a profession?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well he may pick up on something. Something you may not want him to." She worded this carefully. They had not ever explicitly talked about his enjoyment of killing that man but they had danced around it. She had realised what he was the moment she met him. She tried to refer him elsewhere but it was half hearted and he knew it so he had been persistent, neither of them the type to back down from a challenge.

"He already has." Remembering their conversation in the river that day. He had glimpsed him, his true self and he had not run away or been fascinated, he had just accepted it.

"Does that not worry you?" It should, she thought, it worried her.

"It perhaps should but I trust him. I believe he understands me."

"He understands what you allow him to understand, Hannibal. You have layers of walls around yourself. You have become an expert at showing people precisely what you wish them to see and nothing more. How long have you known this man?"

"A few weeks."

"Then I suspect he has barely scratched the surface of your perfectly constructed person suit." She had called him that before but today it irked him. He usually found her astute observations amusing and a refreshing change, today was different somehow.

"He saw through me much quicker than most." Than you, he thought. "We have a connection. I'm not sure what it is yet but I want to explore it."

"That is good that you seek connection. You must be careful to make it go both ways. Be aware of the connection he may feel to you and how that could make him feel. Do not abuse it." He would though, she knew as did he, she just hoped this man had some idea of what he was getting himself into. Then again did she? Sitting in this room with this man week after week. He was a like a drug, her fascination with him would be her undoing.

"I will be aware of it. We are moving slowly. We mostly talk over the phone. He is very busy."

Dragging out the need, very clever, toying with the poor man. "What are your intentions?" Hannibal never did anything that wasn't planned out.

"I am not sure. We have a connection I would like to see where it goes." His intention was to burrow his way into Will Graham's mind and see what monsters he might find, whether there were any they might share.

"What about Doctor Bloom? How does she feel about you having a connection with her friend?" She had always found Doctor Bloom's sympathy for him amusing. How could she not see who he was? Then again the version of himself he showed her was very different from the one she saw.

"She encourages it."

Of course she does, she thought, she is someone who encourages others happiness. "You value your friendship with Doctor Bloom." In as much as it is useful to him. She always assumed they had slept together but maybe not if he was gay, if he was. Hannibal seemed like the sort of person who didn't put much stock in labels. His attraction was based on usefulness and pleasure, not much else.

"Yes very much."

"Then you must be aware that this could jeopardise it if things were not to work out."

"I think she has other concerns right now. I am sure it won't though." If it does Hannibal realised he was willing to risk it for Will Graham, which was interesting.

"Other concerns?"

"She is starting a relationship with someone who is a suspect in their brother's murder."

That made her more interesting, she wouldn't have thought of Doctor Bloom as being someone to do something so reckless. She was friends with Hannibal but still. "Really. Are you feeling protective of her?"

"I think I will always feel protective of her. In this case I am happy for her. They are well suited." She wondered at his feelings for Alana, she was one of the few people he seemed to soften for.

"That is good. Tell me more about this man?" She was intrigued, his face changed when he spoke about him but not in the same way as it did when he spoke about Alana.

"What would you like to know?"

"You say you feel a connection to him. What kind of connection? Is it just an intellectual connection or physical or both?"

"It's intellectual but also physical. If you are asking if I am gay, I have always found the label reductive."

"If I am honest I always thought perhaps you and Doctor Bloom had a connection."

He paused before answering, a slight look away. "Perhaps. We are just friends now."

"So there was something? Once?"

"She helped me through a difficult time and I will always appreciate her for that. I have been attached to both men and women in my life if that is what you are asking."

"I assumed perhaps that was the case. You find people interesting."

"Some people, yes." Most he found profoundly dull. He did not think of her as dull, however, he found Doctor du Maurier very interesting.

"So your find this man.."

"Will. His name is Will."

"You find Will interesting?"

"Yes. He has an interesting skill he uses for profiling which appeals to me."

"Really?"

"He has the ability to feel and then replay a scene in his head. He describes it like a pendulum swinging back in time so he can piece together what happened. He has a connection with time and violence. I find that interesting."

She was giving him that look again. He knew she was right that this was a potentially dangerous game. "He is drawn to violence?"

"He feels an empathy for it. He can understand it."

"I can see how that would appeal to you." This Will must have sensed the potential for violence in Hannibal. "Does he know the full extent of what happened to you? You said he saw you. Is that because you told him what happened during the attack."

"No. He read the police report. He put the pieces together himself."

"I see." This Will was playing with fire but then perhaps so was Hannibal.

"I did not tell him the full extent of the attack when we first met. He looked it up." He had been surprised at Will's reaction to the information but not that he had looked it up. His curiosity was clearly something he could not control. Hannibal had played on that from the moment they met.

"I see. He has seen all the grisly details then."

"Yes."

"The fact that he didn't look away appeals to you."

"That he looked deeper and didn't flinch appeals to me."

"It would. There are not many who can."

He nodded at that, he included her on the list. "Indeed. Those that do might have other motives for looking."

She smirked at that. "Perhaps."

"You should be wary though, he may have ulterior motives." As do you, she thought.

"I shall be careful." He always was.

After he left Doctor du Maurier he had decided that he had to see Will, talking about him to her had conjured him in his mind and he needed more than just a voice. So he sent Will a message and an hour and half later he found himself pulling up at Will's house with something akin to teenage anticipation at seeing this man again.

Will opened the door, all the dogs spilled out except Winston who stayed loyally at his masters side.

"Hello Doctor Lecter." He was smiling and Hannibal felt his heart skip a beat. He found he was nervous despite the last phone call they had shared he was still uncertain. Seeing him in person was another experience all together.

"Hello Will." He walked through the mele of dogs, who Will eventually called off and back into the house. He met him on the front steps.

They stood very close to each other for a moment, neither of them speaking. Will smelt like fire and coffee, with an undercurrent of cheap aftershave. Hannibal moved one of his hands to the back of Will's neck, gently grasping his hair. He leaned in so their lips were touching, Will closed his eyes in anticipation. "May I kiss you Will?" He whispered.

"Are you always going to ask?" Will breathed back, though he found he liked it when Hannibal did ask, despite the way they had been talking over the phone this seemed even more intimate.

"Do you like it when it I do?" Hannibal asked mostly because he enjoyed hearing Will say yes.

"Yes."

"So may I kiss you?"

"Yes." Hannibal gently kissed him, gently pulling Will's lower lip he swallowed every moan. They parted.

"Come in." Will managed and he led Hannibal inside. Once inside Hannibal kissed Will again cupping his face in his hands.

"Mmmm Hannibal, wait I mean..." Will gently pushed him away but their faces were still so close they could feel each other's breath. "I want to take things slow with you." Being in Hannibal's presence was intoxicating and Will needed a moment to breathe.

"We can. I want to savour you." Hannibal gently kissed him again and then removed his hands from Will's face.

"It's just I haven't. I mean it's been a long time since... I just don't want to rush." After all the furtive phone calls Will was feeling himself being pulled into Hannibal's orbit. His mind was constantly distracted with thoughts of Hannibal and he didn't want this to just be about lust. It had been too long since he had let anyone get this close.

"I know it's been a while for me to, I haven't been with anyone for a long time. I don't want to rush either. I feel a connection with you."

Will was grasping Hannibal's hand they were still stood so close. He wasn't sure he could say what he needed to say. "My last serious relationship was... well firstly I was married and secondly it was to a woman. It's been a while since I have been attracted to a man."

Hannibal was so attracted to Will's vulnerability he wanted to devour him where he stood. He smiled and squeezed Will's hand. "It's okay. I can steer you around the curves." He kissed him gently. "As I said I want to savour you."

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for all your lovely comments and kudos. It's so encouraging to receive.

I hope you are enjoying the story. Sorry for the delay in posting this one.

Xxxx

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Much porn in this. And Italian. What more could you want?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Hannibal had gently, but insistently, guided Will to the bedroom. He couldn't stop kissing him. It was as if the act was a prayer he couldn't stop repeating. He swallowed every moan and flicker of tongue against his as if it was giving him life. Hannibal's hands seemed to be everywhere making Will bend and push against him. They were in his hair, under his shirt and grazing up the side of his torso.

"Sei bella come ho immaginato."

"Fuck is that Italian?" Will just managed to say before Hannibal was kissing Will's neck and unbuttoning Will's shirt.

"Do you like it?" Hannibal was removing Will's shirt now which dropped to the floor and he began to lick and bite at his nipples.

"Yes. Hannibal ugh. Stop. Come back up here." Will guided him back up to his mouth where he kissed him,

"Mmmm mio Caro, ti voglio. I want you."

"Oh god. I thought we were slowing down."

"Do you want me to stop?"

"No. God no."

Hannibal smiled, "bene, Io non credo che sarei in grado voi bel ragazzo."

"Oh fuck I have no idea what you just said but it sounds amazing." Hannibal was kissing his neck again while his hands were finding their way lower. "Wait. Hannibal. What are you doing? In English."

Hannibal whispered heavily into Will's ear. "Caro I am going to take you in my mouth as I want to know how you taste. I desperately want to hear what you sound like when you come. Me refuseriez-vous?"

"Okay that was French I got that. Yes I mean yes I want that but I don't know if I can..." Hannibal stopped him from finishing that thought by kissing him.

"I just want you. Trust me. Let me do this for you. I want to." Hannibal took the wonderful moan that escaped Will as a yes. Hannibal's hands were undoing Will's trousers and pushing them down. Then Hannibal was on his knees and Will's hands were in his hair, Hannibal's tongue was licking the length of his cock, Will's head was thrown back and he was saying Hannibal's name over and over as Hannibal took him in his mouth. Hands were on his hips holding him in place. Will had forgotten how good this could feel.

"Fuck." Will's swearing just seemed to spur Hannibal on. Now there was a hand scraping his thighs and another circling his hipbone. There was tongue, warm mouth and a slight scrape of teeth. "I'm going to come. Fuck." The lights were flickering but Will had his eyes closed so didn't notice. Hannibal had noticed while swallowing all that Will had, savouring, as promised, every drop.

Hannibal stood up and kissed Will fervently. "Paragausite išskirtinį." He whispered into Will's ear and licked his ear lobe.

"What language was that?" Will's voice was breathlessly divine to Hannibal.

"Lithuanian." Hannibal kissed him again swallowing his moans. "Do you always make the lights flicker when you orgasm caro?"

"What?" Hannibal gently guided Will to sit on the bed while he removed Will's feet from his trousers and gently pushed him back to lie on the bed. He scooted up the bed and led his head on the pillow.

"The lights they were flickering. It has stopped now."

"It's just the electrics in the house, its old."

Hannibal laughed, he went back to the lounge to retrieve his coat which he had shucked off at some point. "Where are you going?"

"I don't want dog hair on my coat." Hannibal returned and placed his coat on the chair in the corner. He then removed his shoes and socks,

"Are you going to undress for me?" Will's eyes were wide.

"If you would like caro I will." He smiled and Will nodded.

"What does caro mean?" Hannibal was removing his waistcoat, placing it on the chair with his coat. Then he loosened and removed his tie, the cufflinks on his shirt sleeves were next. He still wore Will's watch which he carefully removed and placed on the small chest of drawers by the chair. Will watched all of this with fascination.

"It means dear or darling." The shirt was being unbuttoned now to reveal greying chest hair and a toned but soft torso, the belt was then removed and coiled, placed on the chair. Then his

trousers were removed and he seemed to take ages folding them. Finally his underwear and he joined Will on the bed, the lights flickered again and Hannibal laughed.

"It's a coincidence."

"I'll take it as a compliment." He kissed Will again. Will was running his hands through Hannibal's chest hair with a strange look of fascination on his face. "How long has it been? Since you have been with a man?"

"Before I was married so years." Will spoke this into Hannibal's chest and he kissed the soft hair. "What about you?"

"A while. The last person I was intimate with was a woman." He put a hand through Will's hair.

Will didn't respond at first as he was distracted by the taste of Hannibal's skin and the feel of his chest hair under his fingers. The feel of all these butterfly kisses and touches were beginning to cause Hannibal to stir slightly. One of Will's hands was making its way torturously slowly down to Hannibal's cock. "If you open the drawer to your left there is some lube." Will's hand cupped Hannibal's balls and he gasped.

"Mmmm Caro. Are you sure?" Even as he said this Hannibal reached for the drawer opened it and felt for the bottle.

"Yes." Hannibal handed Will the bottle which he opened and poured some on his hand. Will slowly pulled back Hannibal's foreskin and traced a finger up the shaft, gently running a thumb over the slit. Hannibal settled back in the bed as Will continued to kiss his chest while very slowly moving his hand up and down. "It's been a while since I've done this to anyone but myself, let me know how it feels."

"Mmmmm Caro, in what language?"

Will laughed. "Surprise me." Will licked a line across Hannibal's nipple and moved his hand faster.

"Mmmm. Caro che si sente divina."

"I'll take it that's good." Will kissed his nipple again.

"Oui bien, tres bien."

That Will understood and Hannibal felt the shape of Will's smile against his chest and moaned. Will moved his hand up and down and occasionally moved his thumb over the slit again which caused Hannibal to gasp every time.

"Aš einu ateiti my sweet."

"Mmmm is that Lithuanian again I like that." Will kissed him as he came.

"Taip. Will."

Will laughed gently and kissed Hannibal's neck as he got his breath back.

"I'm going to wash my hand I'll get a towel for you." Will left the bed as Hannibal sighed.

"Do not be long Caro."

They led in bed, Will's head on Hannibal's shoulder so he could run his hand through Hannibal's chest hair while Hannibal drew lazy circles on Will's back and breathed in the scent of his hair.

"So you were married?" Hannibal kissed the top of Will's head.

"Yes."

"For how long?"

"Two years, we were together for three."

"Why didn't it work out if you don't mind me asking?"

"We wanted different things from each other. In the end I couldn't be what she wanted as much as I wanted to be that for her, even for myself."

"Your work?"

"Yes. I tried to give it up for her, for myself to, live that simple life you said I longed for. But then I let myself be dragged back in and once I was there I changed."

"What dragged you back?"

"Jack. He has a way of getting what he wants."

"Where is she now?"

"They moved away."

"They?"

"She had a son, Walter. He was young. She didn't want him to see the world I saw. I get the occasional letter from him but I think he will move on from me. I hope he will. They both deserve better than I can give them."

"He was not yours?"

"Walter? No. His father left when he was a baby."

"You wanted to save them?"

Will laughed. "I think I wanted them to save me. Molly isn't the type that needs saving."

"Do you miss them?"

"Sometimes. I know it's just a fantasy. I can't be that person I will always find a way back to this job. I am drawn to it I can't help it." Will imagined Molly and Walter in his head for a moment and then let the image dissolve. "What about you? The woman you were with? Was it serious?"

"Not serious. Intense but short lived. We are still friends."

"Have you ever been married?"

"No."

The first time they kissed had been in her office after his last appointment. She wasn't even sure how it had happened. That's a lie she was. She had been thinking about kissing him ever since they danced in the street together. She had been dreaming about the shape of his lips and what his tongue might feel like against hers.

He hadn't planned to do it, at least he didn't remember planning. She had finally agreed to dinner and he was leaving. He took a step closer to her, she didn't move away. Silence had hung over them, thick with unspoken words. His hands made their way to her waist and pulled her slightly closer, she closed her eyes as if seeing him in this moment would make it real, breaking the spell between them. He moved one of his hands lower to the hem of her dress, his fingers lazily brushed her skin pushing the hem slightly up. His other hand went to her chin and tipped her head up to meet his. His touch was so soft and delicate, it took all her breath away. He slowly and deliberately closed the distance between them and placed his lips against hers. She wanted to speak, she wanted to say stop but she didn't.

They stood like that for what could have been hours, long moments stretching out between them. His mouth against hers, his hand circling the skin on her thigh. "Hannibal." She breathed his name and it sounded like a plea. She could feel the shape of his smile against her lips and she still dared not open her eyes.

"Alana." She felt the shape of her name on his lips and it made her moan. The hand on her thigh was moving so slowly upwards, the fabric of her dress bunching.

Eventually she moved one of her limp arms to encircle his waist and the other one went to the back of his hair, feeling the smoothness of the strands. She could feel the tautness of his back muscles under his clothes and it made her want to run her fingers down his naked back and she moaned.

It was then he took her bottom lip between his pulling and sucking. She wanted to stop him but she didn't. Soon they found each other's tongues and deepened the kiss. She felt like she was merging and dissolving in his arms. The hand on her thigh was quite high up now and had found the elastic of her underwear, a finger skirted underneath it. Hannibal's other hand had moved to mirror hers and was in her hair bringing her closer to him. She should have stopped him then but she didn't.

His hand slowly found its way between her legs, under her underwear, he devoured the moan from her mouth as he gently brushed a finger against her, gently insisting himself inside her. She gasped and broke the kiss, head thrown back as he continued the slow and gentle movement, adding another finger. He kissed the arch of her neck, licking and tasting the skin there. He held her as she came, gently biting her shoulder.

He removed his hand, her dress fell back down her thigh. She managed to open her eyes to look into his which were burning into her. He still had one hand in her hair, he gently pulled her closer to him and kissed her slow and languid. He parted from her and placed one last small kiss on her forehead.

"Hannibal."

"Yes."

"I don't... I don't know..."

He smiled and laughed a little which made her feel like she was cracking into small pieces.

"Alana you don't have to say anything. You don't have to do anything." He kissed her again, hands encircling her waist.

"Hannibal stop." She eventually found the words and he parted from her, removing his arms from around her waist. She turned away from him and he moved close behind her not touching her. She could feel him achingly close to her. "We should not have done that." She whispered, wishing that didn't sound like a lie.

"You could have asked me to stop sooner." He bowed his head slightly so he could smell her hair and she could feel his breath.

"I know." He took it as the admission it was and wrapped his arms around her waist, nuzzling her neck.

"Do you want me to stop?" He whispered in to her neck.

"Yes and no." She closed her eye and felt his lips on her skin, she thought about dancing with him and what tequila would taste like on his lips. She could still feel the electric of the orgasm slowly rolling through her.

He smiled at that. "I would apologise but I'm not sorry. The sight and feel of you was wonderful."

She blushed and he smiled again. "We have crossed a line."

"I'm not your patient anymore."

"Technically and only just." She was finding it hard to concentrate with him so close, one of his hands was making its way down her thigh again and she moaned.

"We are friends."

"Hannibal."

He stopped and took her hand and gently pulled her around to face him, he kissed her hand gently. "Come to dinner tonight and we can talk about it."

She smiled. "Okay." She closed her eyes and tried to push away the feeling of wanting to kiss him again.

The second time they kissed was in his kitchen after he poured the tequila she had brought with her. She had insisted he drink it and then she kissed him tasting it on lips was as intoxicating as she feared.

"I have been wondering what it would taste like on your lips." He smiled at this admission and the blush that appeared on her cheeks.

"How did it taste?"

She looked down at the floor and then back up at him. "Good." He leaned in and kissed her again, putting his arms around her waist pulling her in close.

"I thought you wanted to talk."

She looked at him, placing her fingers on his lips and feeling the shape of them. She realised she didn't want to talk. "No. I don't think I do."

He smiled and led her upstairs.

It was an adrenaline haze now, small parts lingering, bigger parts threatening to consume him. The blood though that was clear, bright red and strangely beautiful. The curved arch of blood from the girl's neck. The bullets leaving his mind moments before they left the gun, the smell, the sound. The literal pulsating feeling of her life ebbing away under his hands, watching as blood left her veins overflowing onto his hands.

The father's last words slipping through the thundering beating of his heart. Someone coming to remove his hands from her neck, he could still feel the pulsating in his fingertips. The cold

air hitting him as made his way outside.

"Will." Her voice was calm but concerned, practiced and careful.

He looked at her, they had taken his glasses for evidence and all his clothes. He was sat in an FBI tracksuit in her office, he looked incongruous to her and felt like he wasn't really there at all.

"Jack wants to talk to you. I said it can wait. I can drive you home."

"Is she dead?"

He knew the answer, he felt the answer, but he needed it spoken. Alana sat down gently next to him on the couch and took his hand in hers. "Yes." Her voice whisper. "She died in the ambulance."

He nodded. "I can talk to Jack."

"Will."

"It's okay. I can talk to Jack now, I want to. I need to." He needed to say the words out loud in the hope they would leave him, he knew they wouldn't leave him unscathed.

"Okay." Alana squeezed his hand and left the room.

A few minutes later Jack appeared and perched himself on the edge of Alana's desk facing Will.

"What happened?"

"I went to the builders yard and looked at the files. I found Gareth Jacobs Hobbs' file. He hadn't left a forwarding address, I asked the woman to look it up."

"You didn't call for back up."

"Not until his wife came out, she bled out on the front step. I think he saw my car and knew. Maybe. I'm not sure. I called for back up and went inside with my gun. He had the daughter by the throat with a knife. He cut her and so I fired the gun. I think twice I'm not sure."

"It was more than twice."

"Okay. I tried to stop the bleeding but I couldn't. Then the back up came."

"You will need to make a formal statement. It can wait but you will need to."

"Okay."

"You will need to see someone about this. You killed someone."

"A psychiatrist? No."

"We'll discuss it. For now let Doctor Bloom take you home. Take a few days. I'll call you."

He was going to protest but Alana had come back in, they exchanged words but Will didn't know what they said.

"Will." She put his hand on her shoulder and he looked up. "Here." She handed him his cleaned glasses. "The guys at the lab cleaned them for you." He took them and put them on. "Let me take you home."

He thought about protesting but decided she was probably right. "Okay."

"Did you want me to call Hannibal? Let him know what's happened?" She wasn't sure how far things had progressed with them but she wanted him to know. "I can tell him to stay away. It might be good he knows. Unless you want to tell him."

Will hadn't thought about it. "Yeah tell him. Take me home first then tell him. Tell him I'll call him."

"Okay. Come on let's go."

Will dutifully followed her out to her car.

He debated whether to ring. He knew Will wouldn't pick up but he wanted to call anyway. He called and left an awkward voicemail which he immediately regretted. Will rang him back which he wasn't expecting.

"Hi." He wanted to ask him how he was, but that seemed a ridiculous question.

"Hi."

"I feel as if asking how you are would be redundant."

Will laughed it was a hollow sounding laugh but a laugh nonetheless. "Yeah."

"Thank you for calling me back I wasn't sure if you would. I wasn't sure if I should call. I wanted to hear your voice."

"I listened to your message and realised I wanted to hear your voice too."

"I'm glad you called me."

"Me too. Could you..?"

"Anything Caro, what is it?"

Will smiled at the use of the pet name. "Could you distract me? I keep seeing their faces when I close my eyes and when I open them."

"How can I distract you?"

"Tell me something. Anything. Tell me about your day."

"Okay. I finished the design for the watch I will show it you. I think I'm going to hand paint the face instead of refurbishing something. I missed you a lot. More than I should, more than I should be telling you. I thought about you and having you in my arms, the weight of you, the feeling of your hands, your lips, your hair, the way you smell."

"Tell me something in Italian."

"Caro ti dirò che sei bella, Vorrei poter baciare il tuo dolore di distanza. Voglio tenere tra le mie braccia, caro."

Will had closed his eyes and found himself being lulled by Hannibal's voice, for the first time he didn't see Gareth Jacobs Hobbs or Abigail, he saw nothing just darkness and the sound of Hannibal's voice speaking to him a language he didn't understand.

"I wish you were here next to me."

"I am Caro, in my mind I am. I am right beside you."

"Could you come and see me tomorrow? I've been signed off work. Would you come out and see me?"

"Yes. Of course."

"There is a spare key under the mat if I'm asleep. You can let yourself in."

"I will come tomorrow."

"Can you keep talking to me until I fall asleep?"

"Continuerò a parlare a lungo dopo, se porta il comfort."

Will smiled and allowed himself to be lulled again by the pull of Hannibal's voice, it washed over him in waves of darkness until sleep finally came.

He had continued to speak to Will for hours even after he knew he was asleep. Then he listened to his breathing and soothed him again when it became laboured. He left early in the morning to make the drive to Will.

The dogs didn't bark when Hannibal let himself in, they just surrounded him. After he put all the bags of groceries he had brought with him away, he let the dogs outside watching them all sniff and do their business. They all made their way back inside and settled quickly as if they knew Will needed peace today.

Hannibal made his way to the bedroom, Will was still sound asleep his breathing regular. He was curled up as tight as a ball, his phone next to his pillow. Hannibal removed his coat and shoes, he gently got into bed beside Will pressing his body up to his, he gently put his arm around Will and kissed his earlobe. Will stirred but didn't wake. Hannibal closed his eyes, drifted off into a light sleep with the smell of Will's hair following him into his dreams.

Will woke up to the warmth of Hannibal next to him, his arm covering his own. He kissed Hannibal's hand and moved in closer. "You're here." His voice was rough from sleep.

"I am Caro. I let your dogs out and then I climbed in here with you." He kissed his shoulder.

"Mmmm thank you." Will still hadn't opened his eyes, he just wanted to feel this moment for a bit longer before full wakefulness came.

"I can make you breakfast."

"I don't want you to leave this bed."

"Then I shall stay for now but you need to eat."

"You don't need to take care of me."

"I want to."

Will smiled. "Even though I am danger to your profession."

"Perhaps especially so." Hannibal kissed Will's earlobe again.

Will laughed. "You are a masochist."

"Perhaps. I also know that you cannot help with whom you fall in love." He didn't mean to say it but he also found he didn't regret it once he had.

"Doctor Lecter with whom are you in love?"

"Con voi la mia cara con voi."

Will smiled and shifted around so he was facing Hannibal, he slowly opened his eyes. "English."

"I thought you liked my Italian."

"I do. Say it in English."

"With you, Caro, I am in love with you."

Will smiled and kissed him. "I am a mess you may regret it."

"I have very few regrets in my life Will, I know you would never be one of them."

"Even if I stop time."

"Even if you broke every clock I owned." Will laughed. "Let me make you breakfast Caro."

"I don't think I have anything but dog food."

"I assumed as much. I brought us everything we will need."

"You came with groceries."

"Yes."

"Planning on staying?"

"For as long as you needed me Caro." He kissed him again and got out of the bed.

"Did you bring coffee?" Will had closed his eyes again.

"Yes."

"Hmmmm I love you." The words left his mouth before he could stop them. He kept his eyes closed, Will didn't see the grin on Hannibal's face.

"Go shower and I will make coffee and breakfast for us."

Will appeared dressed but with wet hair to the smell of coffee and breakfast. Hannibal was cooking eggs as Will walked up behind him and put his arms around Hannibal peering over him at the food.

"Smells good."

"Where are we going to eat?" Hannibal turned his face and kissed Will on the cheek.

"Ahhh yes. Good point." Will left him. "I think I can find some space just give me two minutes." Hannibal laughed as Will went about clearing the small kitchen table and chairs. He mostly moved the piles to the floor. "See, a table!" Will announced.

"Indeed."

"How long have I got I might feed the dogs quickly if we have enough time."

"Of course."

Will smiled and then let the dogs out of the house, while they were milling around he set up their food bowls on the porch. Hannibal found himself watching Will as the pack lined up in a row waiting patiently for the go ahead from Will, once given all went to their task of devouring their food with great enthusiasm.

When Will returned Hannibal had set the breakfast out on the small table. It was laden with food, two plates of eggs and sausages, baskets of croissants and pastries all of which looked homemade, freshly squeezed orange juice and coffee.

"Wow. That's more food then I generally eat in a week."

"I know. You do not take care of yourself."

"I see you intend to change that."

Hannibal smiled and pulled a chair out for him. "Yes." Will laughed and sat down, he went for the coffee first. Hannibal sat down opposite him. "How are you feeling?"

"I don't entirely know. Better now you are here. Thank you for last night and for all of this."

"It is my pleasure."

Will set about to eating his eggs, "did you make those pastries?"

"Yes."

"When do you find the time to bake?"

"I find there is always time for the things you enjoy in life. Some might argue you do not have time for seven dogs and yet."

"Good point."

"I can't believe you brought groceries."

"As I said Caro I want to take care of you."

Once they had finished breakfast they went for a walk with the dogs. It felt good for Will to be out in the fresh air and moving with his pack. Hannibal found he enjoyed seeing Will in his element. They walked mostly in silence as Will threw various sticks for the dogs. He seemed lighter and less troubled and it made Hannibal happy to think he had been a part of that.

"Will. I feel I need to be honest with you about something. If you are feeling better." He knew he needed to tell him about Alana. He wasn't really sure why they had both kept it from him it just seemed right at that time but not now, in this moment he wanted Will to know everything.

Will stopped and looked at him for a moment and read the expression there. "Ah." Was all he said.

"I told you the last person I was intimate with was a woman." Will nodded. "I didn't tell you who it was."

Will looked away at the dogs chasing the birds on the field. "I wondered when you would tell me. Which one of you would tell me."

"You knew."

"Not with certainty, until now. I can read your face. I know when Alana is lying. I don't mind that you were with her I just don't understand why you both kept it from me."

"At first, I think I just didn't think it relevant. I didn't know where this was going. Then I was worried that you wouldn't want to be with me if you knew I had been with her. Then I left it too long to tell you and it seemed less like an omission and more like a deception."

"Yet you could tell me you loved me." He turned back and looked at Hannibal then, his expression was open but a little hurt.

"I do love you. That's why I wanted to tell you. I didn't expect to fall so quickly, I didn't expect you."

"It's over between you and Alana now?"

"Yes she is with Margot."

"Does Margot know?"

"I am not sure. I do not think so."

"You have both made it worse, like you two have this secret relationship. If you had just told me when I asked it wouldn't seem... devious."

Hannibal reached for Will's hand. "I know. I think perhaps we don't talk about it because it did seem so private at the time. It was a bubble between us, she was a source of great comfort to me. I like to keep it separate. I'm not use to opening up to people."

"Trust me I get that. I am not either."

"We are just friends now, for some time."

"I didn't expect this either. It scares me. I don't want to repeat the mistakes I made before. I want us to be honest."

"You know more about me than anyone else Will, including Alana. What we talked about on the river that day. She doesn't know."

"Have you ever talked about that to anyone else?"

The pause he left before answering and Will's look made it impossible for him to lie. "Not explicitly. My therapist who I see now, we have skirted around the issue. She saw through me like you did, you were faster."

Will didn't respond immediately. He was wrestling with the thoughts in his head and he could see a shadow standing just behind Hannibal's shoulder that he didn't want to look at directly. He closed his eyes but could still feel it there, waiting. Hannibal pulled him closer into an

embrace, putting his hand on the back of Will's head. "Caro." He whispered. "si prega di non essere nel dolore. Do not be in pain my love."

They parted and Will looked up at Hannibal with tears threatening to burst in his eyes. "I enjoyed it. I think. Part of me enjoyed it. Killing that man."

Hannibal kissed him it was passionate and filled with longing. "It's okay." He whispered. "I understand." In that moment Will imagined them merging together in an unseen darkness.

When they returned from their walk Will found Jack had called him several times. He called him back, pacing up and down on the porch, and had a brief but frustrating discussion which Hannibal only heard parts of.

Will came back into the house carrying the bottle of whiskey he kept on the lounge bookshelves to find Hannibal making coffee. "Can we make them Irish?" Will opened the bottle and handed it to Hannibal.

"As you wish." He poured a shot in each of the mugs, handed one to Will.

"He wants me. No. He is forcing me to see a psychiatrist before he will clear me for duty again."

"That is it be expected after what you have been through isn't it? Surely it's just a formality so they can tick some boxes." Hannibal sipped his coffee.

"He won't let it be Alana. Which to be honest is probably a good thing."

Hannibal winced slightly at that. "Please don't let my mistake effect your friendship. She was in the middle of this and she is going through her own problems."

"I know, I know I won't. That's not what I meant really. I just mean she is going through her own stuff and we are probably too close. Jack seems to think so too, he is going to recommend someone else."

"Perhaps it will help."

"As a rule therapy doesn't work on me. Tried it."

"What about seeing my psychiatrist. If you can suggest someone to Jack. She is very good."

"Is that wise?"

"She is not going to reveal any secrets about me. She isn't allowed. Anyway as we established you know them all."

"She?"

Hannibal rolled his eyes. "I have not slept with her. I just prefer talking to female therapists they have less ego. I can call and ask her on your behalf if she would see you?"

"Maybe. Can we talk about it later?"

"Yes. Of course. What would you like to do now?"

Will took a large gulp of his coffee and walked towards Hannibal who was leaning against the kitchen counter. Will placed his own cup down and then took Hannibal's. "I think I would like to go back to bed."

Hannibal smiled and closed the distance between them and kissed Will gently. "Mmmm Caro would you like some company?"

Will smiled. "Yes."

He had forgotten what it could feel like, although he was sure it had never felt like this. The electricity between them was palpable. Will had taken his time stretching Hannibal, he wanted to make it last but he could feel the pull of his orgasm.

"Caro. Please."

Will pushed inside Hannibal, one of his hands on Hannibal's back and the other reached around and stroked his cock.

"Yes. Fuck yes." Hannibal's accent was even more divine like this. He could feel how close they both were. Will noticed the lights flickering but dismissed it. "Caro I'm going to come."

Will continued to fuck Hannibal through his orgasm and he came shortly afterwards. They both collapsed on the bed too over stimulated to move.

Will kissed Hannibal's shoulder. "That was amazing."

Hannibal smiled. "For me too. You made the lights go off."

Will realised at some point the lights had indeed gone off. "It's just the fuse I'll sort it when I can move. It happens all the time."

Hannibal started to laugh. "I am sure it does."

Will hit him gently as they readjusted so Will could rest his head on Hannibal's shoulder, running his hand through the chest hair.

"I am not sure what you are implying."

Hannibal just continued to laugh and he kissed the top of Will's head "nothing Caro, nothing."

"It's not true this whole conspiracy all of you have concocted. It's just coincidence."

"I know you believe that. I think it's endearing."

Will sat up. "You are ridiculous."

"Maybe so."

"I'm going to get cleaned up and check the fuse box."

"As you wish caro. I shall join you."

Will kissed him and muttered "ridiculous" under his breath as he made his way to the bathroom. Hannibal laughed and followed him noticing Will's father's watch, which he had placed on the bedside table, had stopped again. He sighed. This was going to be a problem.

Chapter End Notes

Sei bella come ho immaginato - you are as beautiful as I imagined.

bene, Io non credo che sarei in grado voi bel ragazzo - good I do not think I would be able to you handsome boy

Me refuseriez-vous? - you would refuse me?

Paragausite išskirtinį - you taste exquisite

che si sente divina - that feels divine

Oui bien, tres bien - yes good very good

Aš einu ateiti - I am going to come

Taip - thank you

Caro ti dirò che sei bella, Vorrei poter baciare il tuo dolore di distanza. Voglio tenere tra le mie braccia, caro - Dear I'll tell you that you are beautiful, I wish I could kiss your pain away. I want to hold you in my arms, dear

Continuerò a parlare a lungo dopo, se porta il comfort. - I will continue to speak long after if it brings you comfort

Any comments are so adored. Thank you for your support so far. Xx

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

"I dreamt about you last night." Will shifted in the bed to get closer to Hannibal who was curled around his back, breath heavy and constant on Will's shoulder. He didn't stir and Will carried on whispering into the growing morning light. "I dreamt I couldn't see. There was nothing but darkness, not a crack of light, my eyes were open but there was nothing." Hannibal's hand twitched on Will's arm but he didn't wake. "I wasn't afraid. The darkness was just there it didn't want to harm me it just settled there in front of my eyes and it almost felt like an old friend. It was as if my loss of sight was something that I had not lost, but rather the darkness was something I'd gained." Will still had his eyes closed as he whispered conjuring up the dream from his sleep memory. "I could hear your voice in the darkness. You spoke to me in languages I couldn't understand. Your words coiled around me like smoke, they touched my skin as if you were kissing me a million times over." Will was silent while he listened again to the memory of those words and they made him ache. He opened his eyes and let them adjust to the light. He whispered Hannibal's name like it was a benediction.

Chapter Notes

I feel like I need chocolate after writing this..

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"I dreamt about you last night." Will shifted in the bed to get closer to Hannibal who was curled around his back, breath heavy and constant on Will's shoulder. He didn't stir and Will carried on whispering into the growing morning light. "I dreamt I couldn't see. There was nothing but darkness, not a crack of light, my eyes were open but there was nothing." Hannibal's hand twitched on Will's arm but he didn't wake. "I wasn't afraid. The darkness was just there it didn't want to harm me it just settled there in front of my eyes and it almost felt like an old friend. It was as if my loss of sight was something that I had not lost, but rather the darkness was something I'd gained." Will still had his eyes closed as he whispered conjuring up the dream from his sleep memory. "I could hear your voice in the darkness. You spoke to me in languages I couldn't understand. Your words coiled around me like smoke, they touched my skin as if you were kissing me a million times over." Will was silent while he listened again to the memory of those words and they made him ache. He opened his eyes and let them adjust to the light. He whispered Hannibal's name like it was a benediction.

Hannibal had stayed for two nights but eventually Will told him to leave he couldn't avoid work for ever and he had to see Jack. Hannibal had called his therapist and set up an appointment for Will. The days they had spent together had been strangely easy like they were taking up a life they had already lived. It felt strange to Will who even in marriage had always felt like an imposter. With Hannibal he felt like himself, perhaps more so than he ever had. With him gone he felt a heavy loss that made him scared and disappointed. Suddenly he felt less than the sum of his parts without Hannibal there to make him feel whole.

Walking down the hallway of the FBI building he felt like a ghost. He entered Jack's office to find he wasn't there, he sat on one of the comfy chairs and waited for him. He idly noted that Jack had his computer switched off. Maybe he just never used it. Will found he smiled as he imagined Hannibal's laugh.

"Will." Jack entered the room with his usual combination of carefulness and bravado. A measured arrogance.

"Jack."

"How are you? Did you manage to get some rest?"

Will smiled. "Yes. Some."

"Good. You need to see someone before I can clear you for duty again."

"I know. I made an appointment with someone."

"Okay."

"I cleared her through Alana. She can write me a letter tell you I'm a good, sane boy."

Jack sighed. "Will, it's just procedure."

"I know." Procedure which Jack hid behind or ignored entirely depending on his mood.

"When do you see them?"

"I see her this afternoon."

"Good good."

Will handed him the envelope he had been clutching in his hand. "This is my statement. Figured you would want me to print it out." Rather than email, he thought, as perhaps his emails might create a virus that would shut down the entire system, he smirked at the thought.

Jack took it from him. "Thank you." Jack was glad of the paper as usually emails from Will came with a certain amount of risk, usually blank or arriving a lot later than they should. "We didn't have a chance to properly discuss the Verger case. Did you look at the file?" Jack had retreated behind his desk and was sitting down, placing Will's statement on the pile of papers already stacked there.

"I read the file, yes."

Jack raised an eyebrow. "And?"

"There is no new evidence to suggest Margot did anything. Just a new motive."

"Are you aware of her relationship with Alana?"

"Are you?" He would not confirm it.

"Yes."

"Then why are you asking me? It has no relevance to the case."

"Really? I thought you and Alana were friends."

"We are. Again what relevance does that have?"

"Will you must know. Did you...?"

"What?"

"Did you do as I asked?"

"I read the file."

"You didn't use your skill."

"Which one? My apparent ability to effect electronics or to put together evidence of crime scenes. Neither would help in this case. As this case does not involve electricity and is closed."

"Will. Margot is dangerous."

"That's your opinion. You have no basis for that, you have no proof against her and until you do I am not going to get more involved than I already am. Anyway I am not even on duty. Technically."

"Fine play it that way. Get this therapist to sign you off and we can revisit this."

"There I was thinking you cared about my welfare."

"That's not fair I do care and I also care about Alana."

"Do you Jack? Or do you just care about closing cases? Sometimes I don't see a difference." He hadn't meant this to come out quite as embittered as it had, but found a certain amount of freedom in being so honest.

"You are on thin ice Mr Graham."

"Am I? Look Jack just leave this Margot thing alone. What difference does it make?"

"What is that supposed to mean?"

Will took off his glasses and rubbed his face. "Nothing Jack I just mean if there was any new evidence it would have been found by now surely? It was an accident just let it go."

"That's not what you meant. You meant that Mason Verger was an awful human being and you think the world is a better place without him so really what does it matter? It matters, Will, people can't just go round killing people they don't like."

"That's not what I said."

"You didn't have to. Don't think I don't know who you have been spending time with either."

Will stood up then. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"Doctor Lecter."

"What about him?" Will was finding he felt a huge amount of territorial anger which surprised and frightened him.

"You saw the case file."

"I did, what of it? Are you investigating him as well? Do you make it a habit to investigate everyone your colleagues are seeing?"

"I am not investigating Doctor Lecter no. However that doesn't mean I shouldn't be or that I wouldn't be if I could."

"What does that mean? If you could?"

"He has friends in high places."

"So?"

"If he was anyone else the investigation would have gone further."

"Jack if you really thought that you wouldn't have let it go." Will still felt a hollowness in his stomach that made him feel slightly sick.

"Maybe I didn't have a choice."

"Look whatever you are implying I don't care Jack. My personal life and Alana's for that matter are off the table. Leave it alone."

"That's not your call though Will."

"Yes it is. When it comes to Margot and Hannibal you have no proof, you have nothing. Until you do I don't want to hear about it." Will left and Jack watched him go.

Hannibal was constantly distracted. He had a meeting with the client who had commissioned the piece he was working on, he had been professional and courteous but his mind was elsewhere. It was like when you got a song stuck in your head or a line from a play or film, Will's whispering voice was going round and round in his head. At first he thought he dreamt it. The slow way the words had left his lips, the slight drawl usually subtle more clear in the sleep lilted tone of his voice. It was beautiful. He had wanted to stay there in that moment for the rest of his life.

He had gone home early, hoping to distract himself with cooking. Alana called him and he sighed and picked up.

"Hello Alana." He made his way to his lounge, leaving his food prep in the kitchen.

"Hi Hannibal. How are you?"

"Well Alana. You?"

"Good. I just wanted to check in with you. How are things with Will?"

"I told him about you and I."

There was silence. Hannibal had fixed himself a small whiskey and was sat on his couch. "How did he react?" She eventually responded.

"He knew. Well he said he had his suspicions. He wondered who would tell him. You should tell Margot."

"I know. I will."

"Alana. We didn't do anything wrong. I don't know why we both kept it secret."

"I know. Maybe it just felt like it was ours. Like it was just between us. Now we have both met someone that has changed, it has to."

"Yes I believe it has to change. It doesn't mean what we had wasn't special Alana. It meant a lot to me. Don't think it didn't."

"I know. Me too. I guess part of me always thought maybe we would..."

He smiled. "Yeah I know. Not now though."

"Makes me sad."

"You should be happy. This is the best thing for both of us. We wouldn't last, ending it when we did means we have a friendship. I value that more than anything else."

"Me too. I guess it just feels strangely final, I find myself grieving for something that ended months ago. Grieving for something that will never happen."

"Alana. We made our choice. We made it then."

"I know Hannibal. I'm happy with that choice I'm happy for you and Will too. I am. I guess there are just a lot of changes..."

"I'll always be here for you Alana that will never change." He closed his eyes and thought of dancing with her outside his shop that night and smiled.

"That goes for you too Hannibal. If you need me I'm here."

"I know."

They were both silent and then Alana breathed out the question. "Are you in love?"

He smiled and laughed. "Are you?"

"Yes. I asked first. Are you?"

"Have you spoken to Will?"

"No not yet. You are infuriating! Are you?"

"What?"

"Hannibal! Are you in love with Will?"

He let out a long breath and conjured Will in his mind. "Yes."

"Are you scared? Just answer."

He could see Will turning away from him after he told him about Alana. "Yes. Are you?"

She laughed. "Terrified."

"So we can be terrified together." The thought made Hannibal feel comforted.

"We can. Although my fear is also about the fact that I am going to become a mother."

"You will be wonderful Alana."

"That's what people say, you would never say you are going to make a terrible mother."

"Yes but that doesn't make it any less true about you. I have every faith Alana that you will be nothing but spectacular as a Mother."

"Thank you."

"My pleasure."

"I should go. I should talk to Margot I just wanted to hear your voice."

"It will be fine Alana I promise. If you need me call me."

"I will. Goodbye Hannibal."

"Goodbye Alana."

After he hung up the phone he downed the rest of his whiskey and went back to cooking too much food hoping Will would come by and help him eat it.

She was seeing him at her house, it was large and very grand. It was quite similar to Hannibal's which he did not find comforting. She was also beautiful which did not surprise Will at all. Of course she would be.

She was surprised at how scruffy he was. She would have not expected that from Hannibal. He must have an interesting mind.

"So I have reviewed the case file but if you want to tell me in your words what happened that perhaps will be more useful." Her voice was smooth, a comforting tone. Will found it disarming.

"I shot a man in the line of duty after he had killed his wife and daughter in front of me. He was a serial killer."

"Have you ever killed anyone else before?" He noted how she did not add 'in the line of duty' to that question and smiled.

"No."

"How are you feeling about it?"

"Like I did the right thing. I wish I could have saved the girl. I should have pulled the trigger quicker."

"So you have regret but not about killing this man."

"I do not regret the death of a serial killer no. I regret the death of the innocents around him."

"His wife and daughter?"

"Yes."

"How do you know they were innocent?"

"What do you mean?"

"How do you know they didn't know what he was?"

"They looked surprised when he slit their throats so it seems unlikely they knew."

"Maybe they were just surprised he turned on them."

"He acted alone. There is no evidence to suggest otherwise."

"You are not responsible for their deaths. You know that rationally yet you feel guilt for them."

"Yes."

"Would you say that is a normal reaction to the situation?"

He thought about it for a moment, having never really known what normal was. "I suppose."

"I would agree. Have you been having nightmares? Waking or otherwise? Hallucinations?"

He had at first but then Hannibal had come and he hadn't since then. He felt like he might though. He could feel the shadows forming in this room and he wished he was back in his bed with Hannibal.

"I was at first."

"They stopped."

"Yes."

"Do you know why? Was there a reason do you think?" She knew that reason and was trying to keep the smirk from her face. Something which was not entirely lost on Will.

"Has he told you about us?"

"Who?"

Will smirked. "Hannibal. Has he told you who I am? How he knows me?"

"Who you are? Do you mean who you are to him?"

Will realised he had walked straight into that one. "Has he told you how he knows me?"

"He said you work with Alana Bloom. I cannot divulge any information about patients."

"I'm not asking you to. I just wanted to know if he told you we were..." What? In love? That sounded so childish in this room at this moment. What were they to each other? Everything, he suddenly thought and winced.

"He said he felt a connection to you. Do you feel a connection to him?"

A connection, a draw, a constant thread pulling at him. "Yes."

"You are not someone who makes connections easily."

"Is that what he said?"

"No. This isn't about what he said. I am not a go between. I observe people Mr Graham. You have difficulty making eye contact and your body language is defensive."

"Yes I have difficulty. I am not good with people. Can we stick to the reason I'm here."

"This is relevant to that surely you understand that."

"My ability to make friends has nothing to do with me doing my job."

"Your ability to connect or not connect with people could have an impact on your ability to process trauma."

"I do have some friends. Not just Hannibal."

"Doctor Bloom."

"Yes."

"What about other colleagues at work?"

Will thought about the argument he had just had with Jack and the way the lab guys had ushered him out the other day. "I have colleagues."

"Not friends."

"Maybe. I'm not sure. I'm a difficult person, people find me difficult."

"The support system you have at the moment is primarily Alana and Hannibal."

"I suppose."

"Do you feel that's enough?"

"Yes."

"How do you feel about going back to work?"

"I'm not sure, I want to, I need to in some ways."

"In what ways do you not need to?"

"When I have left before it never lasted. I missed it. I wonder if that would still be the case."

"What has changed?"

"I have killed someone."

"It's not just that though. Your relationship with Hannibal has made you think differently perhaps about happiness, about the possibility of contentment."

"Perhaps."

"Do you want me to sign off on you being fit for duty?"

"Yes."

"Then I shall."

"If you want to keep seeing me you can."

"I don't know about that. I have never found therapy to be helpful."

"We could just have conversations."

"I feel like no one could just have a conversation with you."

She smiled. "No perhaps not."

Once Will had left she went to the kitchen and poured herself a glass of wine, she walked back to the lounge where she had seen Will. She noticed it was quieter than usual. She walked to the clock on the mantel piece, Hannibal had refurbished it for her. It was an old family heirloom but it had never worked in her lifetime until he fixed it. She put her ear to the face. Nothing. It had stopped. How strange, she thought.

After his appointment with Bedelia, Will felt restless and grumpy. It had not been a good day he wished he had never left his house or Hannibal. He thought about just going home and sleeping until the morning but he knew he needed to see Hannibal. He had organised the dog sitter to take care of the dogs yesterday thinking he might end up staying at Hannibal's. When he pulled up in the driveway he could see the lights on and it made his heart feel slightly lighter. He hoped Hannibal was cooking. He hoped he had wine or even better whiskey.

Hannibal had heard Will's car and gone to the door to greet him. Will looked tired and worn. Hannibal embraced him and they stood wordlessly in the doorway until Hannibal gently led Will through to the lounge, sat him down and poured him a whiskey.

"Thank you."

"My pleasure caro. I won't ask how your day was as I can see how it was on your face. So I want you to take your coat and shoes off, relax put your feet up. I am cooking us dinner it will be ready in an hour just take some time to yourself to come back to me okay?"

Will looked at him, this mirage of a man. How did he know exactly what he needed? "Stay, just for a bit." Hannibal smiled and sat down on the end of couch, Will put his glass of

whiskey on the small table, removed his jacket and shoes, then led down so his head was in Hannibal's lap, who instantly started stroking his hair.

"Essere ancora il mio amore, essere tranquillo." Hannibal soothed him and Will closed his eyes and let that voice wash over him like it had in his dream. "Essere tranquillo."

He could feel himself relaxing and letting go of his day. "Thank you." He whispered quietly.

"Prego caro."

"If you spoke Italian to me for the rest of my life I think I would die happy." Will smiled and Hannibal thought he would also die happy if he could keep this moment forever.

"Si avrebbe bisogno di imparare l'italiano anche. You would need to learn it too."

"Maybe."

"Rest my love." Hannibal gently lifted Will's head from his lap, placed a cushion under it, kissed his forehead and then placed a cashmere blanket over him. "I'll wake you in an hour."

"Thank you." Will's voice was already getting blurry as sleep pulled him. Hannibal stood and watched him for a few moments and then left to continue preparing dinner.

An hour later Hannibal appeared in the lounge, he lingered over the sight he found there. Will had tangled himself up in the blanket, legs were sprawled at an awkward angle, his shirt had ridden up to reveal a slice of his back, his jeans had ridden lower showing a hipbone, his hair was a glorious mess. Hannibal smiled. He quietly retrieved the paper and pencil he kept in the lounge, sat in the chair opposite and began to sketch. Aware that Will would wake up any moment he was quick, he knew he had to imprint this on his memory so he could do a more detailed version later, for now he just needed to get the basics right. Will didn't move though. It seemed his thrashing had finally stopped and he was in a deep sleep, a slight snore escaped him and Hannibal almost laughed. He had most of it done without the finer details by the time Will woke up.

"Ugh, Hannibal what are you doing? I thought you were going to wake me up." Will was untwisting himself and attempting to tame his hair while Hannibal smiled at him.

"I'm sorry caro you looked so peaceful. I couldn't bring myself to. Dinner is ready if you are hungry."

Will's eyes began to focus, he had removed the blanket, sat up and was starting to see what Hannibal had been doing. "Oh god you didn't."

"What?"

"You sketched me. In my sleep. That's not creepy at all!" He was smiling though.

"It is not creepy, I couldn't miss the opportunity."

"At least you didn't take a picture. Did you?"

"The thought hadn't occurred to me. I just sketched you. I suppose it may have made more sense. However I do have a pretty good memory."

Will laughed, he stood up and went over to Hannibal. He picked up the sketchbook and looked at the drawing. It was very beautiful and Will was pretty sure that's not what he had looked like but was grateful for the flattering portrayal. He placed it on the couch by Hannibal, then he lowered himself onto Hannibal's lap straddling him. Hannibal sat back to make room for him. Will kissed him slowly, letting the feeling wash over him, Hannibal's hands were making their way up Will's back.

"I missed you." Will mumbled into Hannibal's neck as he kissed and licked the skin.

"I missed you too."

"Can I stay tonight? I organised care for the dogs."

"How can I say no when you are in my lap?"

"You can't."

Hannibal smiled. "Of course Caro I would have you stay here forever if I could."

"I just wanted you all day. Your hands. Your mouth. Your skin. All of it."

"I know I felt the same." Hannibal reached up a hand to run his fingers through Will's hair. "You must eat. Have you eaten yet today?" Will answered him with a kiss. "I will take that as a no." Hannibal gently lifted Will off his lap and stood up.

"The ease with which you just did that, I'm not going to lie, was hot."

Hannibal laughed. "You are skinny it was easy." He kissed him in the forehead. "Come on, lets go eat."

Will could suddenly smell the food and was ravenously hungry. Hannibal led him through to the dining room. The table looked immaculate, the centre piece was mostly green leaves, several different types, shapes and sizes, nestled in them were deep red roses.

Hannibal pulled out a chair for Will and then poured him some wine. "To start we have caramelised veal sweet breads, cepe tart with a warm vinaigrette."

"Wow." Will laughed. "I seem to say that every time I am at your table."

"It is a pleasure to hear it." Hannibal filled his own glass and then sat down. He smelled the wine first and then took a sip, Will watched him. "Please eat caro."

Will smiled and began to eat. "This is delicious Hannibal. You didn't need to go to all this trouble. You must have had work to catch up on today."

"I did. I had a meeting with a client about his watch. Which even though I was distracted through went well. I found I was worrying about you. Cooking helps to calm me, so I came

home early and cooked enough for two hoping you would appear."

"Well I am sorry you worried about me but I am glad for the outcome." Will speared another sweetbread and the savoury flavour mixed with the slightly sweetly acidic nature of the vinaigrette was divine.

"I can't believe you are self taught. It's astounding."

Hannibal bowed his head in an attempt at modesty. "I attempt to excel in everything I do."

"The consummate perfectionist."

"Indeed."

"You said you have finished the design of the watch? I would love to see it, if you still want to show me?"

"I brought it home. I will show it to you after dinner." A slight pause. "I spoke to Alana today."

"You told her that you told me."

"Yes. I don't know if she spoke to you today."

"No. I was only briefly at the FBI I was going to see her after Jack but then, well, my meeting with Jack was not without incident and I wanted to just leave. I will catch up with her."

"Do you want to talk about Jack?"

Will sipped his wine. "No I think it's best if I don't." Will was thinking over what Jack had said, he would find a better moment to bring it up. When his head was clearer. "How was Alana when you spoke to her?"

"She is unsure of her own happiness I think." Hannibal remembered her words of her own self made damage and he hoped Margot and the baby would alleviate some of it.

"What do you mean?"

"She is not good at being happy. She is suspicious of it."

"Perhaps in this case she has good reason."

"You think Margot is dangerous?"

"Not to Alana but she I do not think she is entirely innocent."

"Are any of us?" Hannibal drank his wine. Will watched him carefully.

"I suppose not." At least not those sitting at this table, Will thought. "Are you going to ask me about Bedelia?"

"Do you want me to?"

Will was becoming irrationally irked by Hannibal's accommodating manner this evening.
"She is very beautiful."

"She is." Hannibal wondered why Will's mood had so suddenly changed. Perhaps he shouldn't have mentioned Alana.

"She was kind of rude." She was very rude actually, Will thought.

Hannibal smiled a pained smile. "Yes she can be... abrasive."

"That's one word for it. Why do you see her?"

"I often ask myself that question."

"Why did you send me to see her?"

Hannibal wondered how to put this considering Will's rather mercurial mood this evening. "I thought you would respond to her. You said you don't like psychiatrists. She is the least like a psychiatrist as any therapist I have encountered, I thought you might like that about her. I was clearly wrong." What he wanted to say was that they were very similar, they both used acerbic sarcasm to communicate their boredom with the world and the people in it. A quality he usually found amusing except when it was directed at him.

Will stared at Hannibal trying to read him. "That's not what you wanted to say. Did you want her to meet me for some reason?"

Hannibal put his fork down and looked Will directly in the eyes. "Will. I suggested her because she was outside of the FBI, she uses unorthodox methods which I thought you might at least appreciate if not respond to. I had no other motive than to help you. I had no reason for her to meet you. In fact it is likely she will become more interested in my private life now that she has met you." Why, why did he say that?

"More interested?"

"There is nothing between us Will, I'm not lying. I'm not hiding anything. I know you might think I am and I understand that but I'm not. I don't know how else I can convince you."

Will thought about this and looked at Hannibal's open expression. He cracked. "I'm sorry I don't know where this bad mood came from. I guess I am still angry about Alana. Or I'm just tired. I think Doctor du Maurier made me a bit crazy."

"She can have that effect. I'm sorry I suggested her. Let me get our main course."

Hannibal cleared the plates with a certain amount of cautious relief as Will's mood seemed to improve. When Hannibal returned Will was smelling the herbs in his garden on the wall holding his wine glass. "This is interesting. I don't know anyone else who would have a herb garden on their dining room wall."

"I designed it when I decorated the house. I liked the idea. Please sit. We are having Rose Veal, fillet mignon with slow cooked cheek and a red wine jus."

"Sounds amazing." Will made no move to sit back down.

Hannibal put the plates down and then made his way over to Will. He stood close to him. "Will." He fixed Hannibal with a stare that went straight through him. "What is it?"

"I'm not used to this." His expression had suddenly softened and it made Hannibal want to kiss him but he didn't, he just stood and waited for Will to speak again. When he did it was in a soft tone, just above a whisper, he looked at the plants while he spoke. "You care for me. You do things for me. I don't know how to do this."

Hannibal slowly and gently took Will's hand in his. "I want to care for you. It doesn't mean I want anything more from you than just being in your company. If you want to slow all of this down we can. You have suffered a trauma and if you need time then I will give you that. After all that's my profession."

Will smiled at the bad joke. "I just make it stop."

"In more ways than you know caro." Hannibal squeezed his hand gently. "Please eat, you will feel better for it." Will looked at Hannibal finally, his eyes were wet with the beginnings of tears. "Oh caro I hate to see you in pain." Hannibal leaned close to Will, took his head in his hands, Will closed his eyes and Hannibal kissed each eye in turn. "Se potessi bacio via il tuo dolore mio caro vorrei. If I could kiss away your pain I would."

"You do." Will breathed and opened his eyes. "You do."

Hannibal smiled and let him go. They both went back to the table.

Once they had finished eating, mostly in silence with occasional glances of comfort. Will was feeling better and more like himself. The feelings of jealousy and inadequacy leaving him as he felt so comfortable in Hannibal's presence. They had retired to the lounge and Hannibal was showing Will the drawing of the design for the watch.

"It's beautiful Hannibal." The sketch was so detailed every element of the mechanics and design accounted for. "I can't wait to see it come together." Hannibal smiled at the easy way Will inserted himself into the future.

"Thank you. Actually I have a present for you."

"A present? After how I've been tonight I am not sure I deserve a present."

Hannibal took hold of his face again and kissed him. "Caro you always deserve a present."

Will laughed and Hannibal walked over to the sideboard and opened the drawer. He returned to Will with a small box and a larger wrapped present. Will opened the box, it was his fathers watch with the new strap. "Hannibal it's lovely and you got it working again?"

"Yes. We may need to keep it out of the bedroom though if we want it to continue working."

Will blushed and Hannibal wanted to devour him. "Thank you its beautiful." He put it back in the box and tried to ignore the smirk on Hannibal's face as he sat down next to Will.

Will placed the watch on the small table next to his wineglass and began unwrapping the other parcel. It was a framed drawing of his fathers watch like the one Hannibal had done for his client. It showed the complete watch, all the separate pieces as well as the complete mechanics. It was beautiful. Hannibal watched as Will's face took it in. "Hannibal." He looked at Hannibal, tears in his eyes again but this time with a smile.

"Do you like it?"

"I love it. It's amazing. When on earth did you find time to do this?"

"I don't need much sleep."

"It's... I don't even know. No one has ever given me anything like this before." Will carefully placed the drawing on the table. He looked at Hannibal who was watching Will's every move. He leaned in close to him, he touched Hannibal's lips with his fingers lightly brushing their shape against his fingertips. He moved the other hand to feel his high cheekbones, brushing the pads of his fingers along the high arch. He moved to feel the shape of his eyes and forehead as if he were blind feeling the shape of Hannibal's face.

"Will."

"No call me the other name you always call me." Will's voice was low and deep.

"Caro." Hannibal spoke his name like it was a prayer.

Will closed the distance between them and kissed him, making his way onto Hannibal's lap to straddle him again. "I thought we were slowing down caro."

"I don't remember agreeing to that." Will was unbuttoning Hannibal's shirt, running his hands through his chest hair, dipping his head down to kiss Hannibal's shoulders. Hannibal's hands encircled Will's waist and found their way under his shirt to his hipbones which he lightly circled with his fingers. Will moaned. "Mmmm I love that."

Hannibal then put his hands under Will's arse and stood up, Will wrapped his legs tightly around him. Hannibal carried him like that to the bedroom and led him on the bed. Hannibal slowly undressed Will taking his time, placing kisses all over the skin he revealed, touching every plane and dip, bone and muscle. Will reached up with eager hands and removed Hannibal's shirt.

Hannibal stood and removed the rest of his clothes carefully while Will watched with that fascinated expression on his face. He moved back to the bed and put himself on top of Will bracing himself with hands either side of Will. "What do you need caro?"

Will bucked his hips up against Hannibal, there erections meeting. "You, I want you. I want you inside me."

"Are you sure caro" Hannibal kissed his collarbone, licking the ridge.

"Yes. Please Hannibal. Yes." Hannibal smiled and kissed him fervently on the lips. Will placed a hand on the side of Hannibal's face and another on his lower back. "I want you to blindfold me. Can you do that for me? I want to hear your voice in the darkness while you fuck me. I want you to talk to me in any language."

Hannibal smiled and kissed him again. "Anything for you caro." Hannibal deftly got off the bed, he looked back to see Will had turned over onto his stomach, his back stretched out, his arms folded under his head, eyes looking at him. He smiled and thought he should sketch him like this. He went to his walk-in wardrobe and removed one of the many ties he had, it was a deep burgundy like the roses he had put on his table. He came back out and knelt beside Will on the bed. He placed the tie over Will's eyes and tied it in a tight knot at the back of his head carefully avoiding catching his hair. "Is that comfortable caro?" Hannibal ran his hand down Will's back and he moaned.

"Yes."

Hannibal took the lube from the bedside table and straddled Will. He poured some on his fingers and with one hand gently skirted Will's hole, his other hand he placed on his lower back. He very slowly put one finger inside Will who moaned at the sensations. "Adoro i suoni si fanno." Will moaned again and Hannibal smiled pushing his finger in further.

"More. I need more." Will's pleading voice was almost overwhelming.

"Ci sarà più il mio amore, essere paziente, tanto per essere ancora." Hannibal pushed in another finger slowly, Will started to buck up against him and Hannibal pushed the hand on his back firmly to still him. "Essere ancora."

Hannibal continued to push inside Will, another finger and he gently touched Will's prostate which caused him to say Hannibal's name with a pleading passion. "Caro. Sei pronto per me? Are you ready for me?"

"Yes." Will gasped. Hannibal shifted his weight from Will, removed his fingers and placed his hands on Will's hips pulling them up. Will shifted up so he was on his knees, legs spread further apart, his head still on the pillows, forearms and hands flat steadying himself. Hannibal ran a hand down his back, pulled back the foreskin on his cock, then both hands returned to Will's hipbones steadying him. He placed the tip of his cock against Will and pushed slightly in Will moaned, a low and guttural moan.

"Caro. I need you. Are you ready for me?"

"Yes please yes." Will was pleading now and rolling himself back onto Hannibal's cock.

Hannibal pushed slowly until he was all the inside, he waited for Will to relax and get used to him and then he began to move in and out of Will. "Ti senti così bene. Il mio amore non ho mai voglia di smettere di cazzo ti piace questo."

Will moaned as the pleasure of being taken like this with Hannibal's words in the darkness swam around him. He never wanted it to end. It felt like the waves of pleasure were making him whole again, Hannibal's words were flowing over and around him like music he never wanted to stop.

"Aš norėčiau, kad jūs čia su manimi amžinai, mano mylimasis." Hannibal was so close to coming he could only think in his native language. He reached a hand around to Will's cock and began to stroke it. "Esame kartu, mano meile, abu puses visuma."

"Fuck. Argh Hannibal yes. I'm going to come."

"Kaip aš esu." Hannibal came inside Will and continued to stroke Will until he moments later came over Hannibal's hand. Will collapsed onto the bed. Hannibal slowly got off the bed and went to the bathroom he cleaned himself and then returned to Will with a damp facecloth and towel. He gently removed the tie from around Will's head. "Caro. Turn over let me clean you. Then I will run you a bath."

Will wordlessly let Hannibal take care of him. He placed a kiss on his forehead. "Are you warm enough? I will go run you a bath and then I will return." Will nodded, his eyes closed.

Once the bath was drawn, Hannibal returned to Will and picked him up, carried him to the bathroom and gently lowered him into the water. Will opened his eyes and looked at Hannibal. "You don't have to carry me everywhere." Will smiled.

"I know caro. I wanted to."

"Are you going to join me?"

"In a moment." Hannibal kissed his lips. "Relax I will return."

Will wasn't sure how long Hannibal had been gone but when he returned he was wearing a blue silk robe, he perched himself on the edge of the bathtub watching Will's relaxed face.

"How do you feel?" Hannibal ran his fingers through Will's slightly damp hair.

"Good. It would be better if you were in here with me."

Hannibal smiled and removed his robe, Will sat forward so Hannibal could slide in behind him, the water sloshing over the side.

"I think we may have flooded the bathroom." Will laughed as Hannibal settled in behind him. Will rested his head on Hannibal's shoulder, his arms on his legs, Hannibal's arms encircled Will, he kissed his neck and shoulder.

"Non ha importanza. Nulla importa, ma questo momento. It doesn't matter, nothing matters but this."

Will smiled and closed his eyes and Hannibal breathed in the scent of him.

Chapter End Notes

Essere ancora il mio amore, essere tranquillo. - Be still my love be quiet.

Essere tranquillo - be calm.

Prego caro - your are welcome dear.

Adoro i suoni si fanno - I love the sounds you make.

Ci sarà più il mio amore, essere paziente, tanto per essere ancora - there will be more my love be patient be still.

Essere ancora - be still.

Ti senti così bene. Il mio amore non ho mai voglia di smettere di cazzo ti piace questo - you feel so good my love I never want to stop fucking you like this.

Aš norėčiau, kad jūs čia su manimi amžinai, mano mylimasis - I would love to have you here forever my beloved.

Esame kartu, mano meile, abu puses visuma - we are together my love two sides of a whole.

Kaip aš esu - me also.

The food Hannibal serves is from a restaurant in Scotland I have been to and is amazing!

Thank you so much for all your amazing comments and kudos. It is so appreciated. You have all encouraged me to write every day which is something I have not done in years.

Please keep the comments coming!

Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

"I always wanted him dead. Ever since I was old enough to know him. I wanted him dead. I don't know if you can imagine wanting the other half of you, the other version of you, dead. It's a strange feeling, it makes you wonder if deep down you hate yourself, because to hate him is to hate yourself. Even though our Father always favoured him over me, part of me still loved him. I think because I wished I was him, I wished I was that version of me that could be loved and accepted by our Father. I hated and loved him, so I hated and loved myself. "

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Margot was waiting for him on his front step when he got home. She was looking much as she did the last time, only a little rounder in the belly, and starting to glow. The dogs had formed a protective little cuddle circle around her. All of which, mixed with his general good mood at having spent the night with Hannibal, caused him to smile at her.

"We have to stop meeting like this Miss Verger." Will walked up to her and helped her stand as the dogs milled around them both.

"I hope you don't mind. The dog sitter let me in and then we all just ended up here."

"Not at all. I think they are starting to love you more than me. Traitorous beasts." Only Winston looked up at that, but he didn't leave Margot's side even with a head scratch from Will. "Come in. We can have tea again if you like?" Margot nodded. He had some nice tea left from when Hannibal stayed, something soothing he seemed to remember.

They all moved into the house and Will insisted Margot sit in the lounge with the pack while he made tea, none of the dogs followed him and he laughed. He returned with a tray which held two mugs of tea and some shortbreads Hannibal had also left.

"You seem to have upgraded your cupboard stocks."

"Hannibal left them. The tea too, it's meant to be soothing. I haven't a clue what it is, the label is in another language. Smells nice." Will put the tray down on his small coffee table and passed a mug to Margot who took it, smelt the tea and hummed approvingly. "I think I can guess why you are here." Will said sitting down with his tea.

"He told you."

"Yes."

"When?"

"A few days ago. After an incident at my work he stayed over and told me the next day."

"She just told me this morning. I went out driving and I ended up here." Margot did not mention she knew of the incident of which Will spoke.

Will smiled. "Well I don't mind. You are welcome anytime. Clearly this lot have decided you are far more charming than me." His entire pack had surrounded her and were all dozing with one eye open in case of crumbs or movement.

She laughed. "It's silly isn't it. To be angry. It's over between them. I just... why didn't they tell us when we asked?"

Will sighed. "Honestly I'm not sure. Also it's not silly to be angry, I was. I thought I was over it too and then I wasn't. I am now though. From what Hannibal said to me he felt like it was private, something between them and he wasn't ready to talk about it until he knew we were... serious."

"So you are? Serious?"

"Yeah."

"It just seems underhanded and strange to me. I don't like mind games." She said this with a stern hardness in her voice and Will understood this was more to do with Mason than anything else.

"I know I understand that and I am sure Alana does too. It wasn't malicious. Alana, for a psychiatrist, is a terrible communicator."

Margot laughed at that and sipped her tea. "This is good."

"I know I think I'm going to have expensive tastes soon."

"He's a good influence."

Will laughed. "I could certainly do with that."

Margot's hand reached down to scratch Winston's head, finding the spot just behind the ear that means he would willingly leave Will for her and never look back.

"You are good with dogs."

"I always wanted them but Mason could never be trusted. I have horses though I love to ride, I feel free when I ride."

"Alana loves dogs I am sure you can add some to the family."

"Yeah."

"You need to talk this through with her Margot I can't say what's going on in her mind. I know she loves you. She is risking a lot being with you."

Margot looked up at Will and met his gaze. "I know I am so grateful. I just wish she had been honest."

"It's the only thing she hasn't been honest about."

"How do you know?"

"I know Alana."

"I thought I did."

"You do Margot and I understand why you are upset but seriously the only way you are going to feel better about this is if you talk to her."

"I know I guess I just wanted to see you. See if you were upset."

"I was I admit for the same reasons as you. But now I'm not. I trust them both to have moved on."

She looked at Will he had the trace of a wistful smile on his lips. "You are in love."

"Pain in the backside isn't it?"

Margot laughed. "Yeah. Yeah it is."

Once he had seen Margot out, the pack looking at him like he was traitor for letting her leave, he made his way back inside. He cleared the mugs and washed them up. Margot had eaten all the shortbread, pregnancy being her excuse to do what she wants not being challenged by Will. He stood looking out of his kitchen window watching the clouds move across the sky, he closed his eyes and breathed in the darkness. He could feel shadows behind him and he shivered. The only sound in his house was the dogs gentle snoring and shifting. He opened his eyes and went to his bag where he had put the picture and his Father's watch.

He removed them both, opened the box with the watch and took it out. He held it in his hand, feeling the weight of it, like Hannibal had done when he first met him, he held it up to his ear. Still ticking. He looked at the strap it was exactly the same leather as the original. Will then noticed a small envelope in the bottom of the box. He put the watch on his wrist, sitting down on his couch he opened the envelope.

A leather bracelet fell out, it was made from the leather of the original watch strap. He would recognise it anywhere. Hannibal had cut it into thin, exact strips and then, carefully, tightly plaited and wound them together, over what Will assumed was a moulded curved metal base, then sealed the ends with silver making a horseshoe shape. He held it in his hands and felt a wave of emotion. He had never met anyone so thoughtful as Hannibal. Slipping it on over his hand on the other wrist from his Father's watch he looked at it. He took out the picture again,

he stood up and found the hammer and a nail from his toolbox by his Lure making desk. He looked around the house thinking of the best place for it. He walked into the bedroom and decided to hang it by the window so he could look at it in the morning and before he fell asleep.

Once hung he it, Will took a step back and looked at it. He noticed there was writing in the bottom corner that he had thought was just Hannibal signature. He looked closer, 'for caro' was written and then Hannibal's loping signature underneath. He put his finger on the glass covering it.

Will took his phone from his pocket led down on his bed and called Hannibal.

"Caro. Are you home? I was worried you said you'd call."

Will laughed, he wasn't use to people worrying about him. "Yes. Sorry I had an unexpected visitor when I got home."

"Who?"

"Margot. Alana spoke to her."

"I see." Will could hear the careful tone in his voice, it made him smile.

"She is fine. I am fine. I told her to talk it through with Alana. I said I was upset. I'm not anymore."

He could feel Hannibal relax. "I'm glad."

Will held up his wrist so he could see the bracelet. "I found the bracelet. I'm wearing it."

"Do you like it?"

"Yes. It's beautiful Hannibal. Why didn't you mention it?"

"We got distracted. Last night and again this morning."

"Yes that's true." Hannibal could hear the blush on Will's face in his voice and it made him ache to see it. "I hung the picture too. In my bedroom."

"The makeshift bedroom in your back room or your actual bedroom?"

"Makeshift. That's where I sleep."

Hannibal laughed. "I'm glad you like it."

"I like the inscription as well. You keep surprising me, I will have to surprise you one day."

"Caro you are always a surprise to me. A wonderful, unexpected surprise. Ever since you appeared in my shop."

Will smiled. "I don't have enough words to thank you. The picture, the bracelet, the watch. It means so much to me."

"You don't need to thank me. I enjoy pleasing you."

"I miss you. We've only been apart for a few hours but I miss you. I feel like a teenager. This isn't suppose to happen at our age."

"Excuse me caro, I am not that old."

Will laughed. "I didn't mean that, I just never thought I'd have this. I never imagined you."

"You don't need to. I'm here."

"Where are you in your house?"

"In my study, reading."

"What are you reading?"

Hannibal laughed. "The Antiquarian Horological Society journal."

"No, really."

Hannibal laughed again. "I need to keep abreast of the latest news Will."

"Sounds fascinating."

"You jest caro, but there is a fascinating article about Robert Lenoir."

"I am sure." Will rolled his eyes.

"What do you read articles about? Insects and decomposition of dead bodies or the latest fly fishing advancements?"

"I will have you know Doctor Lecter I wrote an article about insects and dead bodies. I am quite the expert."

"I have no doubt in my mind of your expertise in all things."

Will laughed. "I think we can safely say you have more knowledge than me."

"Except in the case of the dead and bugs."

"Yeah except in that case. I assume you have written extensively in these journals you read."

"What makes you say that?"

"False modesty doesn't suit you Hannibal."

He laughed again. "However to not at least attempt it would be rude."

Will laughed. "You are ridiculous."

"Am I?"

Will laughed. "Yes. But I love you anyway."

"Well it is just as well I love you too. Speaking of ridiculous, you made the grandfather clock stop again."

"No I didn't. It just stopped again. It's not my fault. You have all decided I have this effect which is just coincidence."

"Really?"

"Yes." Will was getting annoyed now.

"Caro you should not be upset. This special effect you have is one, as I have said, of your many charms. I may have to ban you from my shop though and move the grandfather clock from my house."

Will sighed. "You are being ridiculous."

"Indulge me." The tone in which Hannibal said that made Will close his eyes and picture Hannibal's face, his eyes and the shape of his mouth, the feeling of his arms around him.

"Caro where have you gone? Come back to me. Do I need to speak to you in Italian again?"

"Sorry you distracted me. I was thinking of the many ways in which I could indulge you."

"Then I am forever sorry for interrupting the thought."

Will smiled. "How would you like to be indulged?"

"Mmmm caro I love how every time we speak on the phone we end up speaking to each other like this."

"You start it."

"I thought we were talking about indulging me? This is one of the ways you could indulge me caro."

"Yes we were my love. Tell me how I can indulge you?"

"Where are you?"

"Already in the bedroom."

"That is a good start. Are you wearing your father's watch?"

"Hannibal. Don't even.."

"Are you?"

"Yes."

"Firstly remove it and put it in the lounge, maybe on your Lure desk."

"Hannibal."

"Will. We are indulging me remember. Go. I'm not fixing it again after your orgasm (which will happen) breaks it. In fact on your return turn off the lights in the bedroom."

Will sighed but the promise of where this was going too much to resist. "Fine. Hang on."

"Put me on speaker."

Will sighed and pressed the speaker button on his phone. "Okay I'm going to the lounge I will leave you here." He left the phone on the bed.

He removed the watch and walked to the lounge, smiling as he did so despite himself, and placed the watch on his desk. He then walked back to the bedroom and turned the light off and closed the door. He removed the sweater he was wearing and his trousers and socks. He got the lube from the bedside drawer, placed his phone on the bedside table and led back down on the bed just wearing his t shirt and boxers.

"Okay."

"I heard a drawer being opened you obtained the lube."

"Yes. I also removed my clothes just in my boxers and t shirt now."

"Good caro." Hannibal deliberately used the pet name he had to reward Will's good behaviour.

"Are you comfortable?"

"Yes."

"Good I want you to close your eyes. Let my voice wash over for you a moment. I want to tell you how beautiful you are."

"I'm really not. You are though, you are painfully beautiful."

"Will this is about indulging me is it not?"

Will opened his eyes. "Yes." He was getting turned on by Hannibal's tone.

"I like to indulge in you so I want to tell you that you are beautiful."

"Okay."

"I think you should refrain from speaking caro. I just want to hear your moans." Will smiled but didn't answer. "Good. Close your eyes. Put your left hand under the waistband of your boxer shorts and feel your hipbone. Use your thumb to gently rub circles around it. Just like I

would if I were there. Move your right hand under your boxers and touch your cock just feel it for the moment. Pensa a quanto bello io ti trovi. Tocarre la tua pelle è una dipendenza che fa mormorare la mia in desiderio. Quando ti bacio mi sembra di potermi congiungere a te. Averti vicino è tutto ciò di cui ho bisogno.

Will was getting hard listening to Hannibal, his cock twitched under his hand, he started to squirm slightly. A moan escaped his lips, he could practically feel the smile on Hannibal's lips.

"Caro. Amo i suoni che fai. You may run your thumb over the slit of your cock." Will moaned again and Hannibal smiled. "You may use the lube if you wish, I want you to grasp yourself in your right hand and continue to circle your hipbone with your left hand." Hannibal waited and heard the lube being opened, then he heard another moan. "Amo i gemiti che emetti. Stroke your cock baby, slowly. Amerei toccarti. Amo toccarti. Potrei ascoltarti per sempre, amore mio. Sei così bello, mio tesoro."

Hannibal could hear Will moaning louder now. "You may move your hand faster now, don't forget to run your thumb over your slit I love to do that to you. Moan for me caro, I want to hear how much you are enjoying yourself."

Will moaned loudly then and called out Hannibal's name. "Mmmmm caro yes." Hannibal's breathless response made Will moan again.

"Move your left hand down to your balls, caro, touch them how I do, a gentle squeeze baby."

"Fuck." Was Will's response.

"Caro I love it when you swear. I don't know if I told you that. Say it again for me."

"Fuck, Hannibal."

"Beautiful. I imagine you have quite a rhythm going now, I want you to go as fast or slow as you want. I want you to speak now and tell me how you feel."

"Fuck. I feel....like....ugh...fuck....I'm going...to come....fuck."

"Caro. Yes. Please baby come for me."

Will came with a delicious moan and saying Hannibal's name.

"Fuck Hannibal you are too good at that." Will was still breathing heavily.

"Thank you."

Margot returned to Alana's who was waiting outside on her porch with a look of worry so adorable it almost made Margot want to forget the entire thing. She made her way towards Alana and held out a hand, which Alana took.

"Let's go inside. I want to talk to you." Margot spoke softly and kissed Alana's hand. "I want to talk not fight."

Alana nodded and let herself be led back into the house by Margot. They both sat on the couch next to each other.

"Okay so I am just going to say some things and I want you to just listen for now okay?" Alana nodded and Margot continued. "I spoke to Will you probably guessed where I had gone. Anyway I spoke to him he said he was angry too but he knows there is nothing going on between you and Hannibal anymore. He was upset for the same reason as me, the lie. It makes it feel underhanded. Alana you have to understand that I grew up in a household of mind games, manipulations and lying. I can't do that again. I don't want to bring up this child in that environment either. This is a new start for the Verger name and as much as I love you I won't go back to that. You have to understand that when you lie to me it feels like a betrayal, it's something my brother would do. So please don't lie. I would rather hear the awful truth than be lied to."

"Can I speak?" Alana said quietly and Margot nodded. "I know Margot. I completely understand what you are saying to me and it hurts me to think I hurt you like that. It was never my intention to deceive you or manipulate you. I won't ever again. I can promise you now it's the truth between us all the time."

"Okay."

"If we are going to be telling the truth Margot, it works both ways. You need to tell me. You need to tell me what happened with Mason." Margot stared at her for what seemed like an age, Alana would not look away a steely determination had taken over. "I'm serious Margot. All cards on the table. I have told you everything about Hannibal and I. There is nothing else you don't know. I know you are hiding from me what happened between you and Mason. I won't judge you I just need to know so I can protect you, so I can protect us." She put her hand on Margot's stomach and smiled.

"We are a family now."

"Okay." Margot's voice was a whisper.

"Take your time my love." Alana kissed her hand.

Margot looked straight ahead as she spoke, Alana watched the light from the window create shadows across her face and thought that she had never looked more beautiful.

"I always wanted him dead. Ever since I was old enough to know him. I wanted him dead. I don't know if you can imagine wanting the other half of you, the other version of you, dead. It's a strange feeling, it makes you wonder if deep down you hate yourself, because to hate him is to hate yourself. Even though our Father always favoured him over me, part of me still loved him. I think because I wished I was him, I wished I was that version of me that could be loved and accepted by our Father. I hated and loved him, so I hated and loved myself."

"He was cruel to me, crueler still after Father died. He would take everything I loved from me, leave me with small things but with the threat of those being removed too. He took work from me, not allowing me to leave the estate, not allowing me to create independence, earn my own money become my own person. He would not allow it. He took the woman I loved from me. Drove her away from me with violence and bribery. He would not share me. I was his pet. His animal to torture as he wished. He would not allow me to be happy if I derived that happiness from a source he had not explicitly supplied.

"I know you know all this. But you can't truly know it, you can't truly know how it feels until you have lived with it. Until you have woken up every morning with shame and impotent anger curled in the pit of your stomach devouring you from the inside out. That's what he was doing he was eating me alive, taking small bites at a time. I could feel every mouthful of myself as he removed it, I could feel it being consumed, digested and then discarded.

"I was nothing, a shell, an empty vessel. I had no means to save myself, no will to save myself. He was my only company, my only source of conversation and life. He made sure I was conflicted. He was sometimes nice and gentle to me. Sometimes he loved me. I was the centre of his world, the centre of his love as well as his cruelty. We were two halves of the same whole. It's not something that can be entirely explained in words.

"At the back of my mind I suppose I always wondered when it would end. Who would end it? Who would snap first? Would he kill me one day when he had finally had enough of me and had gotten bored of torturing me? Maybe he would wake up one day and just want to see how many screams I had left in my body before I left it. Or maybe I would snap, I couldn't imagine that though. My anger had dulled to a blunt knives edge. I had the impotent rage of a caged animal. I was reliant on him for everything in my life, to kill him was to kill myself.

"It turns out though I had not factored in the future. Partly because I had never imagined myself having one. Especially after he sent away the woman I loved. I was just surviving. Actually I think I was living on out of spite for him. If I had killed myself then he would have broken me. Spite can be a powerful motivator. It was my sole reason for living.

"After Father died it had taken a few months for everything to be sorted out and paperwork to be drawn up so Mason could be the sole beneficiary of the company and estate. It was when the lawyer mentioned to Mason they had found an addendum to the the will stating that all of it would only be passed down through the male line. Like we were some archaic royal family passing a crown. The lawyer made a passing remark about me and my ability to have children. Mason ignored it at first, I was gay, I was his. Then it grew in his mind like a weed. I was a risk. My womb was a risk. My sexual orientation didn't stop my biological ability to become pregnant. He couldn't watch me all the time. It would only take once.

"So he made a plan as he was want to do. He loved to make plans regarding me, my body and my mind. It was his very favourite most delicious little hobby, as he would say. He said I looked beautiful when I was in pain.

"I overheard him making a plan to have me operated on. To have my ability to have children removed. Not just my ability but my anatomy. He wanted to take it all. So there was no chance. No possible chance. That's what he was planning. He was going to have one of his men grab me, take me to a room somewhere, drug me, cut me, open me up and scar me then

throw away what they found there. He said he wanted to watch while they did it too. Perhaps make the first cut, he did always love to see the colour of my own blood against my skin."

"He wouldn't have been able to do that? Would he?" Alana could not hide the horror from her whisper.

"He could and he would. What could I do? Even if I had reported him to the police I had no proof of his plan. If he had done it and I reported him after the fact what would be the point? The damage would be done."

"Margot I'm.."

"Don't say you are sorry Alana, please don't. I couldn't take another moment of pity from someone, especially you. You have never pitied me don't start now."

"I don't pity you Margot. I don't. I admire you, I love you, I wish I could make these things better for you but I don't pity you."

Margot looked at her then and smiled. "Do you want to know how I did it?"

Hannibal had decided that they all needed to be together in the same room so they all could move past this. He had missed having Alana around for dinner, she had not been over in weeks, pre-occupied with Margot, he had also been pre-occupied with Will. He needed this to end. He wanted to cook for all of them, the only way he knew how to show he cared was to feed people. He enjoyed the ritual of cooking as much as he did of fixing time.

So here he was in his kitchen with his sleeves rolled up, apron on, preparing a feast. He had been in here all day and was happily focused on his tasks. He had decided upon quail as a main course, it was unusual and took time to prepare. He wanted it to be special.

He removed the bone from the small bird without losing the skin, it was a skilled operation which needed experienced knife work. He started at the breastbone and ran the knife along the bone of the carcass to remove meat. Ending up with up with two halves of the quail boneless, apart from the leg and wing. He cut the wing in the middle and cleaned off the meat to use as part of a garnish later. Then he removed the thigh bone leaving the drumstick attached.

He now had half a quail, boneless except for the drumstick and the clean wing bone. He laid this out skin side down and seasoned it, then he took three basil leaves and a strip of eggplant and covered the breast. He then carefully rolled this up into a sausage shape with a bone sticking out at each end. He then laid out a square of net fat and rolled the quail in it to secure it as it cooked.

He repeated this for all four of the quails until they were all prepared and ready for cooking, it would only take a few minutes to cook.

He went about making stuffing using eggplant, basil, olive oil, garlic, anchovies, Dijon mustard, Creme fraiche and lime. He had sliced some sage and cooked it in a pan with butter until it was crispy to add to the dish later.

For the starters he had made his own pasta ravioli with quail eggs and spinach. He had been undecided in using quails eggs, as he was using quail in his main course, but the style and look of this dish persuaded him it was worth the indulgence. The ravioli was homemade, he had made it the day before to factor in the resting and chilling time.

The spinach filling required cooking with garlic, salt and pepper until wilted. Then he drained all excess water from it so he could mould the spinach into small cylindrical parcels with the help of a mould. The quails egg sat in a dip in the spinach and the ravioli was draped over the top. The garnish of porcini mushrooms added a final flourish.

His dessert was cafe creme in a chocolate cup. This was for Will, an ultimate combination of his love of chocolate and coffee. It was an entire art making the cups themselves very time consuming but satisfactory. It was during this process that Will appeared in his kitchen, he had given him a key to the house it seemed easier, Will had followed the divine smells to the kitchen.

Will arrived to the site of Hannibal's hands in the midst of piping the handles for the saucers. He looked divine, his forearms exposed and the look of focus on his face made Will's stomach flip slightly.

"Not going to lie Hannibal the smell and the look of you right now...it's pretty amazing."

Hannibal smiled but did not look up until he had piped all the handles. "Hello Will." Will had come up behind him and was peering over his shoulder watching with great interest.

Hannibal smelt like chocolate and coffee and Will wanted to devour him there and then.

"You smell like all my favourite things." Will had closed his eyes, breathed in deeply and had his arms around Hannibal's waist, nose in his neck.

"I know you are attempting to distract me but I need to get these into the freezer. They need at least four hours to set and I am running slightly behind schedule."

Will was not listening and instead started to lick Hannibal's neck. Hannibal piped the last of the handles having done some extras in case of breakages. He put the piping bag down and turned in Will's embrace and kissed him. "Just go and sit down for two minutes." Hannibal pushed him slightly and Will reluctantly agreed.

"Okay two minutes." Will moved away and went to sit in the armchair in the corner of the kitchen. He watched as Hannibal put the tray in the freezer. He then checked everything else, turning things off or down, he removed his apron and then walked over to Will. He put a hand on each arm of the chair and lowered his head to kiss him. "I need to shower. Care to join me caro?"

"Yes. Definitely yes."

Margot and Alana arrived to the usual amazing smells of Hannibal's kitchen. Margot was nervous until she saw Will who she hugged, he awkwardly let her, while Hannibal and Alana exchanged a smile.

"It's good to see you Alana." She had followed Hannibal into the kitchen to help bring the wine and get a non alcoholic drink for Margot. "I have missed you."

"I missed you too. Who would have thought we would start new relationships at the same time. I guess we are more in sync that we thought!"

"Yes I believe we are." He passed her some glasses to carry and a bottle of wine.

"Thanks for this Hannibal. It's really appreciated."

"I think we both need to do damage control. It's the least I can do."

"Me more than you perhaps."

"Sorry for not giving you any warning that I was going to tell Will. I didn't even plan on telling him it just happened."

"You have nothing to apologise for honestly." She gently touched his arm and he dipped his head.

They made their way back into the dining room where Margot was asking about Will's dogs and the stories behind how he got them all. She was getting teary and Alana rolled her eyes affectionately as she put her arm around her waist. "She is crying at adverts at the moment Will honestly I wouldn't continue unless you want a blubbery mess."

Margot smiled through her tears and laughed. "She's right. I'm so emotional at the moment it's ridiculous."

Will laughed. "At least you have an excuse when I see anything with animals I am pretty much a wreck."

Hannibal smiled. "Yet you deal with death and violence all day. You are a contradiction Will Graham."

"I can't help it I guess I have just always connected with animals more than people. Less complicated."

Margot nodded in agreement and sipped her sparkling cider. "Thanks for the bubbles Hannibal makes it bit more enjoyable not being able to drink."

"My pleasure." Hannibal left to go and get the starters, Will followed to help. "All this looks so good Hannibal you went to so much trouble."

"It's the least I can do." He kissed Will on the cheek and they went back into the dining room.

"Spinach and quails egg ravioli with porcini mushrooms."

"This looks incredible." Margot beamed at Hannibal who smiled back.

They all ate and gave Hannibal more compliments than he ever needed and he loved every one. He enjoyed the showmanship of providing dinner and his audience were appreciative. The final flourish of the desert received a rapturous applause from everyone and Hannibal beamed with pride.

"You are all too kind." Everyone rolled their eyes at him but could not deny him the praise.

Once Margot and Alana had left happily full and Alana a little tipsy, Will and Hannibal retired to his lounge and Hannibal poured them both a whiskey.

"Well that went very well Hannibal."

"Yes I believe we cleared the air nicely. They seem happy."

"Yeah they do." Will smiled.

"Is there any movement on her brothers murder. I didn't want to bring it up."

"It's a closed case it was ruled an accident."

"That's good. When she spoke about it before she said he was murdered."

"Did she?" Will wondered at that, a slip of the tongue or a calculated use of language?

"Yes. When I first met her she said murdered."

"Well it was an accident."

Hannibal noticed Will's tone had changed slightly and he wouldn't look him in the eye when he said this.

"Will?"

"Yes."

"What do you know?" Alana was his friend and this conversation worried him.

"Nothing. It was ruled an accident there is no evidence to say otherwise."

"Why was she called in that day then?"

"Because of the pregnancy. Jack thought it gave her a motive she previously didn't have."

"Have you seen the file?"

"You mean have I used my skill to put it together?"

"Have you?"

"No."

"Why?"

Will didn't answer straight away, he sipped his whiskey, eventually he looked at Hannibal. "You know why." His tone was soft.

Hannibal sighed. "Is Alana in danger?" His tone was even but his eyes were suddenly dark.

"No. Hannibal she is my friend too. I wouldn't do that to her. It's between them. It's Alana's choice to make."

"Is it an informed choice?"

Will sighed. "I believe so."

"You believe so."

"Look Hannibal we haven't explicitly talked about it. I told her I had looked at the file but not used my skill. I told her to talk to Margot." Hannibal was silent. "Margot came to me and she told me she cared deeply for Alana and that she would never do anything to hurt Alana and I believe her."

"So when you said that Margot might not be innocent you meant she is guilty."

Will sighed and downed the rest of his whiskey. He stood up and refilled it from the decanter on the side and turned to face Hannibal. "I don't think either of us is any position to judge." Will noted Hannibal's reaction to this statement. There was perhaps a slight flinch and narrowing of his eyes but he remained stoic.

"I'm not judging. I'm concerned. Alana is not like us."

It was Will's turn to flinch. "If you are worried you should talk to Alana."

Hannibal was quiet for some time, Will sipped his whiskey and watched the fire burn. Eventually he sat back down, leant his head on the back of the sofa and closed his eyes. He could hear the crackling of the fire and feel the weight of the whiskey glass in his hand. The sound of Hannibal's breathing eventually entered his mind and he found he was matching the breaths.

"Caro." Hannibal's voice was soft and Will opened his eyes to look at him. "I'm sorry I don't want to fight about Alana again. I trust you and I trust her to make her own decisions."

"I would have mentioned it but it didn't feel like it was my place to, technically I can't talk about it at all."

"I know." Will placed his glass on the small table by the couch and stood up, he slowly made his way to Hannibal who was watching him intently. Will gently lowered himself onto Hannibal's lap straddling him. Taking the whiskey from him placing it on the table. He buried his head in Hannibal's neck and started to kiss the curve of his neck into his shoulder. "Are you trying to distract me caro?"

One of Will's hands was in Hannibal's hair and the other was around his waist. "I want to indulge you." Will spoke into Hannibal's skin and hoped his words would sink inside. Will leant back and started to remove Hannibal's suit jacket, Hannibal moved forward slightly allowing Will to remove it and he gently placed it on the arm of the couch. Will then undid the buttons on Hannibal's waistcoat, he then reached around to Hannibal's wrists which were currently encircling Will's ass, lifting one up at time he removed the cuff links and placed them on the couch. Will then slowly rolled up Hannibal's sleeves revealing his strong forearms which he kissed and licked reverently. Will then loosened Hannibal's tie and unbuttoned the first few buttons of shirt. Will admired his work. "I like you slightly undone."

"I thought we were indulging me." Hannibal was playful as pulled Will closer to him.

"Indulging me is indulging you isn't it?" Will leaned in and kissed Hannibal slowly, moaning into his mouth.

"Mmmm caro yes." Hannibal's hands were making their way under Will's shirts untucking it from his trousers, feeling the back muscles and skin underneath.

"I have a present for you or rather for us."

Will slowly removed himself from Hannibal's lap. "Caro don't leave."

Will smiled, "I'll be right back." He went to his bag which he had left in the kitchen and removed a small package. He went back into the lounge and lowered himself onto Hannibal's lap. "Here. Open it." He gave him the package, it was a small padded envelope.

Hannibal looked curious, he took the envelope and opened it removing the contents with a slight gasp, "Caro."

"So we don't ruin your ties. Mio tesoro."

Chapter End Notes

The wonderful and ever generous @alackofanythinghtosay translated my words into Italian for Hannibal to say. I am so grateful and thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Xxx

Pensa a quanto bello io ti trovi. - Think of how beautiful I find you.

Toccare la tua pelle è una dipendenza che fa mormorare la mia in desiderio. Quando ti bacio mi sembra di potermi congiungere a te. Averti vicino è tutto ciò di cui ho bisogno.

- Touching your skin is addictive it makes my own hum with need, When I kiss you it feels like I could merge with you. Having you close to me is all I ever need.

Amo i suoni che fai. - I love the sounds you make.

Amo i gemiti che emetti. - I love the moans you make.

Amerei toccarti. - I would enjoy touching you.

Amo toccarti. - I love to touch you.

Potrei ascoltarti per sempre, amore mio. - I could listen to your forever my love.

Sei così bello, mio tesoro. - you are so beautiful my precious.

My wonderful translator informed me that 'my dear in italian would translate as mio caro which isn't really used nowadays as a term of endearment so I used the words mio tesoro which can be translated as my treasure or my precious.' In light of this I debated going back and changing 'Caro' but I liked it too much and Hannibal is old fashioned so decided to keep it. I had been looking for a pet name for Will to call Hannibal and decided that Will heard Hannibal use the term 'mio tesoro' and liked it, so he looked it up and decided to use it!

The ravioli and the cafe creme in a chocolate cup recipe is from Raymond Blanc's book 'Kitchen Secrets'.

The quail course recipe is from 'Jardine - cooking with an accent' by Geoff Jardine (I thought the title appropriate!)

Thank you so much for all the comments and kudos so far. This fandom is very special to my heart and I'm enjoying becoming a part of it.

I have plans for this series it will be updated regularly so please keep reading!

Thank you so much again you wonderful international fannibals. Xxxx

Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

"Hannibal," she rarely used his name and especially in this strangely soft tone, he felt his emotions rising to the surface, "you can allow yourself to be vulnerable. Will is the first person who you have met in a long time that you have felt a connection with."

The words hit him like a wall and he found his eyes were brimming with tears. He had not realized how lonely he truly was, not just since the attack but his whole life. He had been alone ever since he could remember, he always thought himself solitary and self-sufficient but those were all other words for hard and alone. It was a strange feeling to be in love, actually in love for the first time in his life. He suddenly felt terrified.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Hannibal smiled as he unwrapped the black leather blindfold. It had thick straps and buckles at the back, the leather was soft and there was fleece lining on the back. Hannibal held it up and inspected it.

"What do you think mio tesoro?"

"I like the pet name, I see you have been paying attention to my Italian." Will smiled and leant forward and gently kissed him. "Do you want to try this out tonight?"

Will placed his hands through Hannibal's hair and kissed him slowly. He leant back. "Yes."

"I take it you want me to speak Italian?"

"Yes."

"What would you like to do?"

"Anything you want tesoro. Anything."

Hannibal smiled and kissed Will. "You will be the death of me caro."

"Hmmm it will be a good death."

"Turn around so I can put it on. I want to see what you look like."

Will smiled and got off Hannibal's lap, he turned around and knelt in front of Hannibal between his knees. Hannibal placed the blindfold over Will's eyes and carefully avoiding his

hair, did up the buckles.

"Tighter. I don't want to be able to see."

Hannibal smiled and made the buckles tighter. "Move forward a bit so I can help you up." Will shuffled forward on his knees and Hannibal stood up, walked around to face Will, he bent down and took his hands and helped him stand.

"Mi piace." Hannibal walked around Will who smiled at the use of Italian. Hannibal's fingers stroked the leather of the mask, touching Will's hair. He walked around behind Will, he put his arms around Will's waist and started to nuzzle his neck. "Why do you like this caro?"

"It focuses my mind. I am no-where else but here with you. Your voice it guides me and holds me. I could listen to it in the dark forever."

Will could feel the shape of Hannibal's smile against his skin. "Remove your shirt for me caro." Will blindly unbuttoned his shirt and shucked it off his shoulders.

Walking over to Will Hannibal guided him to sit down so he could remove Will's shoes and socks. Hannibal gently moved to unbutton Will's trousers and pulled them off and then he removed Will's boxers. "Lie back caro. Are you warm enough?"

"Yes."

Hannibal watched as the light from the fire flickered across his caro's skin. "Ti venererei per sempre, caro. Voglio che tu senta tutte queste parole lasciare la mia bocca, così che sembri io ti stia baciando, stia accarezzando la tua pelle con le mie parole. La mia voce ti appartiene, le mie parole ti troveranno sempre nelle notti più buie e ti guideranno da me. Non ti sentirai mai perduto, caro, ti troverò sempre." As Hannibal spoke he could see Will was getting more aroused and he was fascinated by it. He thought of all those times on the phone when he had heard Will moan at the sound of his voice but to witness it was something else.

"Caro, I want you to touch yourself like you do when we speak on the phone. Can you do that?"

"Yes. Yes Tesoro, yes."

Will's hand made its way down to his cock and he placed his hand on it, his hips rocking up slightly, a moan escaping his lips.

"I want you to show me how you touch yourself, I want to see it." Will started to stroke himself slowly, his cock was already quite wet with precum, Will spat on his hand and Hannibal found the sight obscenely sexy.

"Go slowly caro. I will tell you how you make me feel. Ti trovo così bello, voglio immortalare per sempre questa immagine di te. Mi hai fatto sentire capito, finalmente, come se tu avessi le chiavi per aprirmi. Sento che anche io potrei schiuderti. Mi sembra che io e te potremmo finalmente confidarci i nostri segreti ed essere liberi. Lo voglio, lo voglio più di quanto io abbia mai desiderato qualcosa. Mi dirai i tuoi segreti, caro? Manterrai i miei?"

Will's pace was slowly increasing as he got harder, he was circling his hipbone with his other hand, and his moans were getting steadily louder. "Potrei ascoltarti venire per sempre, caro Ti terrei qui per sempre, mio amore. Sono così innamorato di te, caro."

"Tersoro, I'm going to come."

Hannibal moved closer and knelt down, "Sit up caro, I want to finish you with my mouth." Will moaned as he removed his hands, sitting up Hannibal grasped Will's hips and pulled him forward. Hannibal licked the length of Will's shaft and softly kissed the tip of his cock and Will moaned. Hannibal smiled and took him into his mouth. Will was bucking his hips gently and moaning, Hannibal's hands were on Will's hipbones slowly circling them. It didn't take long until Will was coming and Hannibal swallowed it all.

"Fuck Tesoro."

Hannibal smiled. "You are beautiful." He reached up to Will and undid the straps on the blindfold gently removing it.

"That was amazing. Thank you."

Hannibal kissed him gently. "Caro, I am going to carry you to my bed."

He hadn't seen her for a while, not since she had seen Will. She opened the door with an even smugger look on her face than normal if that was possible. Her voice was smooth as she beckoned him inside and he sighed, she laughed a small tight laugh which he found oddly charming. Once they were sat opposite each other in her gray, sparse lounge, there was little warm light in the room so it always felt clinical, he crossed his legs and prepared himself.

"So," that smooth patronizing tone again "how are you?"

He smiled at the seemingly innocent question. "I am well, thank you. Everything is going quite well."

"That's good. It feels like you are making progress in returning to your life, you have been back at work now for six months is that correct?" She knew it was, "what about socializing?"

"I spend most of my time with Alana and Margot, and obviously Will."

"You still haven't gotten back in to your old social circle though? No opera?"

"No, I was thinking of going back. I guess it would be the next step."

"You have said before that you don't feel the same connection as before. Is that still the case?"

“Yes, but I miss the opera, the music, the performance. I am finding crowds easier so perhaps it would be a good test.”

“Yes I believe you are ready, it would be good for you. It is important in to be careful when in a new relationship to not become consumed by it, you have been making steady progress don’t slide back.”

“Will is very busy so we are not too much in each other’s lives.”

“That’s important. How is he? Is he back at work?”

“Yes he is. Your assessment was accepted.”

“I am glad.”

“Do you feel like it’s going well between you?”

“Yes.”

“Do you want to talk about it?”

Hannibal considered this for a moment, he felt like they were a separate world the two of them together. When he was with Will he felt like he didn’t need anything or anyone else and when he wasn’t he just felt a dull ache, a hollowing out of himself. He supposed this was not entirely healthy. “I am not sure.”

“Why?”

“I feel as if we are private, that he and I are...I don’t know separate. Then I feel as if perhaps I have made us into a too small of a world.”

“Hannibal,” she rarely used his name and especially in this strangely soft tone, he felt his emotions rising to the surface, “you can allow yourself to be vulnerable. Will is the first person who you have met in a long time that you have felt a connection with.”

The words hit him like a wall and he found his eyes were brimming with tears. He had not realized how lonely he truly was, not just since the attack but his whole life. He had been alone ever since he could remember, he always thought himself solitary and self-sufficient but those were all other words for hard and alone. It was a strange feeling to be in love, actually in love for the first time in his life. He suddenly felt terrified.

“You love him.” The statement was simple and her voice was almost a whisper.

He couldn’t form words straight away as the dawning realization happened so slowly, of what this meant, what this felt like. “I’m not alone.”

“That scares you.”

“Yes I think it does. I don’t know what it means, I’ve never been not alone. I feel like we are becoming conjoined somehow.”

“Have you ever been in love?”

“No I don’t think so. I loved my sister and perhaps one other in a way but no I have never felt like this before.”

“You think about him constantly, you crave him.” Her voice only portrayed a small amount of sarcasm, at least she was attempting to hide it.

“Yes.” He smiled thinking about Will’s moans when he spoke to him in Italian, the way his body responds to Hannibal was intoxicating. It was an amazing thing to watch someone break apart just from the sound of your voice.

She noticed his smile and wondered, it was not a look she had ever seen on his face. His features were somehow more relaxed, she was seeing something not many do, a glimpse into what Will sees perhaps, she felt flushed. “I’m glad. I think perhaps you can help each other, it seems Will was quite lonely too before he met you.”

“Yes I think he was.” Hannibal thought of all the ways Will isolated himself against the world and felt a privilege at being let in.

“Loneliness is no small thing Hannibal. It’s important to not feel alone.”

There was a pause before he responded, his eyes had clouded with tears and he was looking away at the wall, imagining Will’s face. “Is it?”

“After everything you have been through Hannibal it’s important to find the ability to be with someone.”

“I’m not sure I ever had that ability.” His tone was light but she knew he was serious.

“I know.” He looked strangely beautiful like this and it made her smile. “Feeling exposed is not always a bad thing Hannibal. It can allow you to experience new connections.”

“My connection to Will feels... old.”

“As if you have known him longer than you have?”

“Somehow we have always been connected. We were both waiting for each other.”

“Love can feel like that as if you are completing what you did not know was incomplete.”

Hannibal smiled and laughed, “I never thought of you as a romantic.”

“I’m not per say, I just know what the poets tell me.”

Hannibal smiled again, she was finding this happy version of him unnerving. His darkness was still there though, shining with a slick blackness just behind his eyes. She mustn’t forget the lion is always in the room.

“Yes of course the Poets.” He smiled.

After he left Bedelia's he went swimming he needed to clear his head, he felt strong again as he moved through the water. He could feel his head clearing, thoughts spilling out and mixing with the water. Physical exertion was making him feel purified somehow, he longed for clarity, needing to find himself again, needing to find where he began and where Will ended. They were becoming entwined and he found he craved that more than anything. He felt an ecstasy, an overwhelming high at the thought of being in his company. It worried him and scared him.

Bedelia was right he had been lonely his whole life, he had never allowed himself to vulnerable with anyone. He had let Will glimpse at the darkness beneath him and he had not run away from him, if anything Hannibal had noticed it reflected back at him.

Jack had called Will down to the lab and was now making him wait. There was no one here but he still found that he was waiting in his assigned corner too nervous to venture near any of the equipment lest he be blamed for breakages. Eventually Beverley appeared, he liked her she was refreshingly honest and open.

"Staying in your corner I see?" She hit his arm and laughed.

"I'm not saying I believe any of you I just don't want to get blamed for things, or charged for things."

She laughed, "You forget I know how much you earn, so I know you couldn't afford the bill anyway!"

"Funny."

"So you haven't been around much lately? Even less than usual." She smirked and he rolled his eyes, "Come on, you have to give me something? I'm stuck down here all day with Price and Zeller bickering, Alana won't tell me a thing, very unlike her."

"Tell you about what?" he was attempting innocence.

"Will! Come on! You and the new boyfriend. I've heard he's hot. You look all happy which is weird but good on you."

"There is nothing to tell, we are seeing each other."

"Right seeing each other, naked, a lot!"

Will blushed and again and hoped to the gods that Jack would be appearing soon.

“I don’t know what you want me to say.”

“You don’t need to say anything, that blush says it all. Good sex then?”

“Beverley I am not getting in a discussion about my sex life, especially not in the lab.”

“Worried you might break something?”

“Stop it.”

“I’m just jealous. Seriously though glad you have found someone, all though the amount of broken hearted students lurking the halls has gone up since the news broke.”

“What do you mean?”

“Oh come on Will, you know all of your students are desperately in love with you. How could you not notice?”

“They are not.”

“Whatever you say. Anyway I need to meet him, when can I meet him?”

“Never at this rate.”

“Oh come on I’ll behave I promise.”

“Yeah right, you never behave. He’s a private person.”

“Come on I really want to meet him! I will keep hounding you until you say yes, you know I will.”

“Yes that is true, I will talk to him okay? Not promising anything.”

Beverley grinned and then mercifully Jack walked in.

“Will, sorry I’m late.” Jack looked smug about something, this was not a great sign.

“Oh Will is going to be here for this?” Beverley asked Jack.

“Yes Miss Katz, do you have an issue with that?”

“No, no I just wasn’t sure it was that official yet.”

“Have you found something or not?” Jack barked at her.

“Potentially.”

“What’s this about Jack?” Will looked at Jack and knew the answer, “The Verger case.”

“Will, I am only doing my job okay? I only looked into it because Jack asked me to. I care for Alana too.” Beverley tried not to look at Jack when she spoke.

“Just tell us what you have found.” Will said simply.

“Okay. So I have been looking at shards of the glass from the tank which we collected from the scene. Going through each one to see if I could find the source of the breakage or at least a reason for it.”

“And?” Jack encouraged.

“I may, I may have found something suspicious.”

“What?” Will asked.

“There is a striation on the side on one of the pieces that was on the edge of the tank, you can tell it’s an edge piece because it’s curved and the top of the tank was circular. There is what could be a scratch.”

“What makes you think it didn’t happen naturally or was an accident?” Will asked.

“I found similar scratches on multiple pieces.”

“Can I see?” Will asked, ignoring Jack.

“Yeah, come here I’ll show you.”

Will made his way to the computer and Jack winced slightly as he got closer which Will decided to ignore. Beverly brought up the pictures of the scratches.

“Do you know how they were made? What could have made them?”

“It looks to me like there was an original source of impact, a small hit to chip the tempered layer, then it was scratched over time to weaken the glass.”

“So you are saying someone did this?”

“Well it seems likely but I can’t prove who.”

“It’s an ineffective way of killing someone though isn’t it? I mean how would you know when the glass would break or if it ever would?”

“Yes I do agree, it’s risky. Its unpredictable you would have no warning when it broke. Unless you weakened it to a point when you knew that a little bit of pressure would do it.”

“Like someone walking over it?” Jack interrupted.

“You couldn’t predict it though could you?” Will asked Beverley ignoring Jack.

“Not with any great amount of certainty. You may have an idea of when it might break.”

“But if you were waiting for someone to walk over it and you knew they were likely too, if they had been walking over it regularly helping that weakness along, you may be able to predict it?” Jack asked, moving closer to them.

“Maybe. However I don’t have any evidence of who did this, but I would say we can rule out that the tank breaking was an accident.”

“The case is closed.” Will looked at Jack.

“I think Miss Katz just re-opened don’t you?”

“Hey I am just doing my job it’s not personal.”

“I know Beverley, this isn’t about you.” Will gave her a reassuring smile and then looked back at Jack.

“You said you would look again if I found more evidence.” Jack met Will’s eyes.

“More evidence? This is the only evidence you have found. You have a theory and some scratches in the glass nothing more.”

“It’s enough to re-open the case though.” Jack said somewhat smugly.

“Fine when you get it officially re-opened I’ll look at it. Have you told Alana?”

“No and neither of you will either.”

“That’s not fair Jack, we are her friends,” Beverley pleaded.

“I can’t trust that she won’t tell Margot, she may run.”

“Jack that crazy,” Beverley looked at him, “she’s pregnant she can’t just up and leave.”

“She has money and connections she can do what she wants.” They could not argue with Jack on that. “Do not tell Alana, that’s an order.”

Will sighed, “fine, for now.”

“I mean it Will, and you will look at the file.”

“I said fine Jack.” Will sighed again and Jack gave him one last scowl before he left.

“Will, do you think Alana is in danger?”

“A part from the fact that Jack seems to have it in for Margot, no I don’t think she is.”

“This is going to get messy.”

“Yup.”

Will made his way back up to his classroom and closed the door, he pulled out his phone and called Hannibal.

“Caro, are you alright? You don’t normally phone in the middle of the day.” Will was having trouble accepting how much Hannibal seemed to care about his well-being.

“I’m fine I just had a meeting with Jack in the lab, he’s going to re-open the Verger case.”

“Can he do that?”

“Yeah, he’s found new evidence so he can.”

“What new evidence?”

“I can’t tell you, but it’s not good.”

“Have you told Alana?”

“No and I can’t either. Instead I’m telling you, probably shouldn’t be doing that either. You can’t tell her though okay?” There was silence, “Tesoro, I’m sorry I am putting you in this position I shouldn’t have mentioned it I just wanted to talk to someone. You can’t tell her ok? You need to leave it to me to manage this.”

“Of course, I promise and I like that you wanted to talk to me, you can about anything.”

Will smiled, “thank you. Beverley in the lab wants to meet you.”

“Beverley Katz? Alana has mentioned her.”

“Yeah one and the same. I said I’d ask. She can be a bit full on when she wants to be though. She seems intrigued about us.”

“Well it’s good to be interesting.”

“Is it? I think I long to be uninteresting.”

“Not possible caro, you are fascinating.”

Will laughed, “stop flirting with me, I’m not having phone sex with you at work.”

Hannibal laughed, “you always start it caro.”

“Do I? I think you encourage it.”

“So when am I meeting this Beverley?”

“You don’t have to.”

“For you I would do anything caro, if you want to satisfy her curiosity then I am happy to assist.”

“Okay, I’ll see what she wants to do and get back to you. What are you doing?”

“Right now I am trying to source the correct pieces for my commission.”

“How?”

“Various sources, antique dealers, ebay.”

“You use ebay? You know how to use ebay?”

“Yes caro, I am not completely in the stone age.”

“I’m sorry, it’s just surprising.”

“I am glad I surprise you.”

“Can I see you tonight?”

“I thought you were going home tonight?”

“I am, the dog sitter can’t do tonight but you could come to me?”

“Do you have a proper bed anywhere in your house? In your bedroom you don’t use for example?”

“Umm no not technically. The bedroom is more of a store area.”

Hannibal laughed, “yes I thought that might be the case I did not want to open the door when I was there last.”

“So you are not going to stay because I don’t have a proper bed.”

“Caro you forget I am older than you, my back cannot take what you claim is a bed.”

“Fine, I guess I’ll have to get a new bed.”

“I would suggest getting rid of the dogs but I would imagine that not going down well.”

“Sorry I will choose my dogs over you.”

“That hurts caro.”

Will laughed, “what would you choose over me?”

“Nothing.”

Will laughed, “that’s not fair, you make me feel bad. I think you would choose that grandfather clock over me, Alana told me you moved it.”

“Did she? Well I did spend a year restoring it. I didn’t chose it over you, I want you in my home so I moved it to my shop.”

“I’m barred from your shop then?”

“I am afraid caro yes, you are, I cannot afford you being here, you break too many precious things.”

“Fine, as long as I can still be in your bed then I suppose I cannot complain.”

“I would never allow you to leave my bed if I could.”

“Yet you won’t come to mine.”

“If you had a decent one I would.”

Will laughed, “you are ridiculous, I miss you, I want to see you.”

“I miss you too caro. Are you free for lunch?”

“I have some time, my lecture is not until three, but I need to do the lesson plan as I didn’t do it last night for some reason.”

Hannibal smiled at the memory, “then let me bring you lunch.”

“Here?”

“Yes, as I said I am afraid you are barred from the shop. I will happily come to you however, I have enough food for two.”

“You are going to come here and share your packed lunch with me.”

“Caro, this is not just a packed lunch, this is sustenance.”

“Of course I didn’t think that you would just be eating a turkey club like a normal human being.”

Hannibal laughed, “so can I bring you lunch?”

“I can think of nothing I would love more.”

Hannibal smiled, “I am leaving now.”

Beverley heard the laugh, open and comfortable and stopped outside Will’s classroom trying to figure out if that was really Will. She had heard him laugh before but not like this, not this open and loudly. She had no idea he laughed so loudly. Then she heard another voice, with an accent, soft and whispering. She leant closer to the door to listen, was that Italian? She knew she should really knock instead of hovering outside, someone would see her in a minute. That laugh again, it was so loud.

She knocked on the door, there was another laugh and then a shout of “come in.”

“Hi, sorry to interrupt I wanted to see if you were going to the cafeteria for lunch, but I see you have other plans.” Beverley felt tongue tied at this sight of a relaxed Will, she was pretty sure she had never seen him relax before, he always held some kind of tension somewhere in his body even when he was drunk. Here he was sat at his desk, eating what looked like vegetables and smelled divine. The man sat in the chair by the end of the desk was striking, even from behind he had an irresistible aura. He stood up gracefully and turned around to greet Beverley holding out a hand to her as she made her way towards him. He was tall, well dressed and groomed the polar opposite to Will. His cheekbones could cut glass and his eyes pierced her completely, then he smiled.

“Hannibal Lecter. Nice to meet you.” That accent, she thought, wow.

“Hi, I’m Beverley, nice to meet you.” She sounded nervous, why was she nervous?

Will laughed, “hi Beverley, don’t worry he has this effect on everyone. Do you want some food? Hannibal brought an entire restaurant with him.”

Hannibal laughed and offered her his chair.

“It’s fine I can go...” witnessing this was just creeping her out.

“I insist Beverley please sit let me get you a plate.” She sat down and realized Hannibal had indeed brought an entire restaurant, there were various Tupperware containers of risotto, pasta and other concoctions. “I may have gone home before I came here, I know Will does not eat right so any chance I have to feed him something good for him, I take.”

“Yeah I think this is the first time I have seen him eat a vegetable” Beverley laughed as Will popped an asparagus spear in his mouth.

“They never tasted this good before.” Will said with his mouth full.

“Not going to lie I am completely freaked out by this whole scene. I mean look at you two, Will is laughing and eating vegetables with a man who has an amazing accent and can apparently cook like a world class chef. I just don’t know what to do with this information.”

Hannibal laughed and gave her a plate of food, “I would suggest eating.”

“Yeah good plan.”

“I should go anyway, leave you to prepare for your class as you didn’t last night.” Did he just make Will blush? This was too much Beverley was going to implode. “Take the food home with you Will or Beverley take some to the lab.”

“Thanks.” She said as she ate a mouthful of risotto that melted in her mouth.

Hannibal smiled, turned to Will and kissed him lightly on the lips, brushed his face with his hand, “call me later caro, have a good afternoon.”

“Will do and thanks for this, best lunch I have ever had.”

“Beverley it was lovely to meet you, let’s do this properly soon, I will have you over for dinner.”

“Sounds great, thanks for the food.”

“My pleasure.”

Hannibal left them, smiling as he left the room.

“What does caro mean?” Beverley said as soon as Hannibal closed the door.

“It’s Italian.” Will said and Beverley did not miss the glint in Will’s eyes when he said this.

“No wonder you are so happy at the moment, it’s kind of freaking me out actually. I have never heard you laugh like that before. I have never seen you relaxed before! He brings you food, amazing food and calls you names in Italian. Where did you find him?”

“I know great isn’t it? I have to say one of my favorite things about him is his cooking.”

“Well yeah and the rest!” Will grinned and winked at her, “okay now you are seriously freaking me out! Alana said he is a clock maker, how does that work? I mean you are a liability surely?”

“I am not, although he has just banned me from his shop as I keep apparently,” using air quotes, “‘breaking’ his grandfather clock, he moved it from his house to the shop.”

Beverley laughed, “He moved a clock for you, a large antique grandfather clock. They are not easy to move Will, he must have it bad!”

“Just be quiet and eat! I need to do a lesson plan, I have not actually done one.”

“Apparently someone got distracted last night?” Beverley laughed, she had never known Will to not be prepared for a class.

“Yeah couple times...”

“Ok stop it, I’m going, I’m taking this food with me and I’m going.” Beverley stood up.

“Leave the stuffed vine leaves and the tomatoes, take the risotto I need to stop eating it.”

Beverley laughed.

Will managed to get home having avoiding seeing Jack for the rest of the day. He needed to think about what his next move with the Verger case was going to be. He almost expected Margot to be on his doorstep when he got home but she wasn’t there. Which he found he was

disappointed about. He took the dogs for a long walk and tried to think about the best plan of action but instead his thoughts kept bringing him back to Hannibal, he seemed to be a permanent feature of his thoughts these days. The way Bev had reacted at seeing them together made him smile, he was happy, Hannibal made him happy it was a strange feeling. The darkness didn't seem to bother him as much these days, it wasn't gone it was still there in his periphery but it didn't scare him. He could see it Hannibal's eyes sometimes too, it made him feel oddly at home.

He fed the dogs on the porch and closed his eyes conjuring Hannibal's voice in his memory. He sighed.

Winston was looking at him when he opened his eyes, as if he could read his thoughts. "You want to go see Margot buddy?" Winston wagged his tail, "What about the rest of you?" More tails wagging and jumping. "Fine, let's go."

He walked the half hour or so distance to Alana's house with the pack running ahead they knew the way. They could smell Margot he was sure as they got very over excited when they got closer.

Alana opened the door and was greeted by wet noses. "Hey." Will shouted.

Alana smiled and waved at him, she greeted the dogs and waited for Will to get closer.

"Is Margot here? They missed her."

Alana laughed, "she missed them too, yeah she is come in." She hugged Will and they all made their way inside.

Margot appeared moments later and completely ignored Will in favor of the dogs who were greeting her like she was their long lost pack member who Will had kept hidden from them. "What are you guys doing here? Hello, I missed you."

Will laughed. "They missed you too."

"Sorry! Hi Will!" Margot extricated herself from them all and went to hug Will.

"Thought I'd come to you this time. I found I was disappointed to not find you my doorstep when I get home!"

"Ahhh, that's so sweet. Glad you came over, tea?"

"Yes, please."

Margot went into the kitchen to make tea and all the dogs followed her which caused both Will and Alana to laugh, "they might not come home with me at this rate!" they made their way to the lounge and sat down.

"It's very nice to see you but to what do we owe the visit?"

"Have you seen Jack or Beverley today?"

“No Jack, I saw Bev after she had seen you and Hannibal, she was very excited to have met him.”

Will laughed, “yeah I think we may be becoming annoying to be around!”

“No, she said it was nice to see.”

Margot and the pack appeared with the tea, Will stood up and attempted to take the tray for her, “I’m pregnant Will, not an invalid I can carry a tray.”

“Don’t bother Will, seriously she is on a mission at the moment.”

“I just wanted to make sure I got some cookies this time.”

“Hey.” Margot said playfully.

They all sat and sipped their tea, the dogs milled about them and eventually settled near Margot.

“So, Will what’s going on?” Margot asked as she scratched Winston’s ear.

“I spoke to Jack today, he is going to reopen the case.”

“Can he do that?” Margot betrayed no emotion in this question.

“He has found new evidence and he believes he can. He told me not to tell you, so I’m not okay? You did not hear this from me or Bev.”

“Of course, Will don’t worry.” Alana looked worried, “thanks for telling us.”

“What new evidence?” Margot asked.

“The tank, the glass they think someone tampered with it. They have no proof of who but they may be able to prove it has been tampered with could be enough of a cause to reopen the case.” Will spoke gently and tried to be reassuring. “Jack wants me to take another look.”

“Oh.” Alana spoke quietly.

“What does that mean?” Margot asked.

“I will look at it again, it doesn’t mean anything. He has no definitive proof. I wouldn’t worry, not yet. I just wanted to give you a heads up.”

“You thought if you brought these guys with you then it would soften the blow?” Margot laughed but it was hollow.

“Something like that yeah. I’ll warn you if anything changes I promise.”

“Thanks Will, honestly thank you so much.” Alana put a hand on his knee and squeezed it.

“My pleasure. As I am doing you a favor I need one from you, Margot I feel like you can help with this.” Margot raised an eyebrow, “you have expensive taste yes? You know about expensive things which Hannibal will like?”

“I guess so yeah why?” Margot smiled.

“I need to get a new bed and sheets, he won’t stay at mine. His bed is amazing so I figure you might know where I could get one from?”

Margot and Alana laughed, “oh Will you are going to have to learn how to live like a person!” Alana teased him.

“Yeah, yeah, seriously can you help me?”

“Yes, yes I can help you.” Margot laughed, “it will be my genuine pleasure.”

Hannibal got home and looked at the space in the hallway where the grandfather clock had once stood. He sighed, it was quite cramped in his shop with it now he may have to sell it he thought. Maybe he could put it in the spare room and then ask for Will to never go in there. Selling it could be a form of therapy though, letting go, he would think about it. The house was quiet without it. Without Will.

He went through to the kitchen and started the process of making himself dinner and tried not to think about Will, something which was becoming increasingly more difficult.

After he ate he gave in and called Will.

“Tesoro, nice to hear from you. Thank you again for lunch, I think Bev is enamored with you.”

“It was my pleasure, how are you?”

“I am good, I went to see Alana and Margot, I told them about the case.”

“I’m glad, I know you are taking a risk. Thank you.”

“No problem I told them I’d keep them updated, it’s tricky but hopefully we can navigate it.”

“I am sure caro that you will do all you can. How were they?”

“Good, the pack still love Margot more than me.”

“Traitors.”

“I know. I am getting a new bed you will be pleased to hear.”

“Anything that involves you and a bed pleases me.”

“We are going there already are we?” Hannibal laughed, “Maybe we should change it up, let me get you off for a change.”

“You really do have a way with words caro.”

Will laughed, “ok not get you off, yeah I admit that’s not very sexy. I can do better though I promise, if you are lucky I might even swear.”

“Caro you are a tease.”

Will laughed, “okay where are you?”

“My lounge.”

“On the big couch? The one we used last time, I like that couch.”

“Talking about the appeal of my soft furnishings is unlikely to do anything for me.”

“I think you should be quiet like I am with you.” He took the following silence as agreement, “good, now remove your pants and lie back on the couch. Put me on speaker, grab some lube (I believe I may have put some in the sideboard drawer for future use) and let me know when you are comfy.”

Hannibal smiled at that and did indeed find lube. He took off his pants, loosened his shirt and led down as Will had instructed, placing the phone on the floor beside him.

“Okay caro I am ready for you.”

“Good. Tesoro I want you to close your eyes and relax, take a deep breath in and let it go. I want you to feel good, I want you to know that I want you to feel good. You need to know how you make me feel when you do this for me, you make me come undone Tesoro, and I love you for that. I want you to know that I think you are beautiful too, you say that to me all time and I want you to know that I find you stunning. Your voice is arousing but the rest of you is just as sacred to me. I love to see you, I love hearing you in the dark but I also love to see you in the light.

“I want you to use the lube now and slick your hands so you can pull back the foreskin on your cock, I love doing that to you, imagine it’s my hand Tesoro.” Will could hear the lube being opened. “Good Tesoro, good now I want you to grasp your amazing cock in your hand and stroke yourself up and down, up and down. Start slow for me, I want you to last. I imagine you are getting hard now, your cock is filling up for me Tesoro.”

“Yes Caro.” Hannibal sounded amazing when he was turned on, like he was coming undone, layers were leaving him.

“Fuck Tesoro I love the sound of you when you are turned on. Speed up that hand for me, I love your hands so you know. They are so amazing and all the things they can create amaze me. I think I could come just thinking about your hands.” Will heard Hannibal moan and he smiled, closed his eyes and thought about Hannibal, he was led down on his bed, he put the

phone on speaker and opened the drawer to get lube for himself, he was getting so hard just listening to Hannibal and thinking about him.

“I’m stroking myself now Tesoro, so we can come together, ugh just the thought of you makes me so hard, all my favorite parts of your body, your back, your ass, and your forearms. I get so turned on just being around you. I wanted to fuck you over my desk this afternoon, bend you over and stretch you so I could fill you up with my cock.”

“Fuck caro, tell me more..”

“I would have put my fingers inside you and slowly fucked you with them, stretching you until you were begging for me. I would have taken my cock and pushed inside you, using my own spit as lube, you would have moaned for me.”

“Caro, you should have done that..”

“I will next time you visit me, I will fuck you until you can’t stand, you will be moaning so loudly my students will hear you and I will just fuck you harder.”

“Caro I’m going to come.”

“Fuck yes Tesoro me too, fuck I love you.”

“Yes, oh god yes Caro.”

Hannibal came over his hand and to the sound of Will’s orgasm. “Told you I was good at that.”

“You had a good teacher.”

Will laughed.

Chapter End Notes

The lovely @alackofanythinghtosay has once again done the most stunning translations for me.

I have kept their notes to explain certain choices of words because of the care and attention to detail which I appreciate hugely and want to share with you lovely readers.

Ti venererei per sempre, caro. - I would worship you caro, forever.

Voglio che tu senta tutte queste parole lasciare la mia bocca, così che sembri io ti stia baciando (this is not an exactly literal translation but I couldn’t seem to find anything more fitting), stia accarezzando la tua pelle con le mie parole. - I want you to feel all

these words as they leave my mouth, I want them to feel like I'm kissing you, like I am caressing your skin with my words.

La mia voce ti appartiene, le mie parole ti troveranno sempre nelle notti più buie e ti guideranno da me. - My voice belongs to you, my words will always find you in the darkest of nights and guide you to me.

Non ti sentirai mai perduto, caro, ti troverò sempre. (I used non ti sentirai mai instead of the literal translation non sarai mai because it doesn't really sound that good in Italian, also perduto is quite an old-fashioned adjective but I think it could suit well Hannibal pattern speech and attitude. If you disagree feel free to use the words perso or smarrito instead.) - You will never be lost, caro, I will always find you.

Ti trovo così bello, voglio immortalare per sempre questa immagine di te. - You are so beautiful to me, I want to capture this image of you forever.

Mi hai fatto sentire capito, finalmente, come se tu avessi le chiavi per aprirmi. - You have made me feel as if I am understood at last, as if you hold the keys to unlocking me.

Sento che anche io potrei schiuderti (I didn't translate the as well because it would have sounded redundant in Italian) - I feel like I could unlock you as well.

Mi sembra che io e te potremmo finalmente confidarci i nostri segreti ed essere liberi. - I feel as if you and I could spill all our secrets out to each other and finally be free.

Lo voglio (added romanticism because lo voglio is what you usually say when your lover asks you to marry them, it pretty much resembles English's I do), lo voglio più di quanto io abbia mai desiderato qualcosa (here I should have used voluto instead of desiderato but I wanted to avoid repeating the same word too much, also desiderato expresses a kind of subtle sense of longing so it amplifies the sentiment behind Hannibal's words) - I want that, I want that more than I have ever wanted anything.

Mi dirai i tuoi segreti, caro? - Will you tell me your secrets caro?

Manterrai i miei? - Will you keep mine?

Potrei ascoltarti venire per sempre, caro. - I could listen to you come forever caro.

Ti terrei qui per sempre, mio amore. (again with the old-fashioned way, nowadays we usually place the adjective, mio in this case, after the noun so it should have been amore mio) - I would keep you here forever my love.

Sono così innamorato di te, caro. - I am so in love with you caro.

Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

He would hear a voice, a calm slow and steady voice like a heartbeat. It would surround him and join him in a thick and heavy embrace. Even in the silence he could still feel the shape of it, the carved out spaces it left for his fingers to push through and touch. The voice felt as if it belonged to his bloodstream as if the very cells of his being were speaking to him in a language only he could understand.

Chapter Notes

This is where things get angsty and a bit darker, we have Will getting ill and some vague Wendigo porn. If hospitals and wierdness upset you please skip this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

He was drowning in fire, being consumed by his mind through his body. It was a slow burn, steady and constant, scoring its way through his brain, dripping out through his cells onto his skin like acid. All the clocks had stopped, time was no longer moving around him, he was caught in the eye of a fire storm and it was still, flames licking at his skin burning him just enough to keep him alive.

He would dream of water and fever and fire. He would dream of shadows and figures that he could feel rather than see, their shapes were inconsistent and fluid. The darkness when it came was thick and cloying at first, suffocating him, it took him so far down, he tried to scream but the darkness just found its way inside filling him up. Once it consumed him it was a comfort, a place of sweet oblivion he was being held by something else, his old self lost un-mourned.

He would hear a voice, a calm slow and steady voice like a heartbeat. It would surround him and join him in a thick and heavy embrace. Even in the silence he could still feel the shape of it, the carved out spaces it left for his fingers to push through and touch. The voice felt as if it belonged to his bloodstream as if the very cells of his being were speaking to him in a language only he could understand.

Fear would push at the edge of the darkness with a steady, pointed insistence which he would try to ignore, try to dull the sharp flash of pain. His thoughts would seep out and blunt the edge of the fear for moments but too soon they would be burned away and he would be left desperate to scream but unable, instead he could only listen to the voice attempting to sooth

him. He longed to answer back to claw his way towards it...

It was Alana who found him, he had told Jack he had flu and she was worried as Will was rarely so ill he called in sick. He had not turned up at work for a few days and he wasn't answering his phone. She knew Hannibal was away so she went to check on him. She heard the concerned barking of his dogs from a distance and increased the speed of her car.

She entered the house, making the dogs go outside she found Will in his bed unconscious, eyes rolled back in his head. She almost screamed but then got a hold of herself. She felt his brow it was damp and warm. She knew she couldn't lift him in to her car without help so she called an ambulance. She waited with him spoke calm words to him even though the panic she felt was a rising burn inside. It was the longest wait of her life.

They came and they took him, she followed in her car, she rang Margot who came and took the dogs back to Alana's house and then made her way to the hospital. Alana waited again, tortured with worry, she waited. Margot stroked her hair and talked to her in calm words hiding her own rising panic.

"Where is Hannibal? Should we call him?" Margot asked.

"He is away at a conference, he is due back tomorrow I think. I called him and left a message." Alana's voice was rough with tears, "how long has it been?"

"An hour since I got here, do you want me to check and see if I can find out anything?"

"Yeah, I want to be able to tell Hannibal something when he calls me back."

"Okay" Margot kissed Alana's hand and left to speak to the nurses.

Alana was staring at her phone simultaneously hoping it would ring and that it wouldn't. She had called Hannibal a few hours ago now, he would surely be checking his phone soon.

Margot returned, "they said it won't be long, the Doctor is coming to talk to us soon."

"Thanks," Alana allowed herself to be held by Margot and tried to swallow her tears.

The Doctor appeared a few moments later, he took them to a corridor by the room where Will was.

"It's encephalitis, quite a severe case I am afraid. We have had to put him on a ventilator, we are treating him with antivirals and steroids to reduce inflammation in the brain. He is sedated. It's just a waiting game for now."

"Is he going to be okay?" Margot asked as Alana gripped her arm.

"He should be yes, but at the moment we just have to wait to see if the treatment is going to work, it could take some time."

"Can we see him?" Alana was crying fat tears now and her voice sounded far away.

“Yes but for a short visit, hearing a familiar voice might help him.” The Doctor opened the door for them, Alana’s phone buzzed, “you can’t use that in here.”

“It’s Hannibal.” Alana looked the phone stricken.

“Here,” Margot took the phone from her, “I’ll talk to him you go in.”

“Thank you.”

“Hannibal, its Margot.”

“Is he alright what’s happening?” Hannibal’s voice sounded distant and strange.

“He is in hospital, its encephalitis they are treating him, we just have to wait and see if he responds. Alana is with him now.”

“I’m coming back tonight I’ll be there in the morning, call me if anything changes.”

“Okay, Hannibal I’m sure he will be fine.”

“Thanks Margot,” Hannibal hung up the phone.

Hannibal was sat at Will’s bedside, he was whispering into and kissing Will’s hand.

“Caro, caro, you need to come back to me now. You always said you could hear me in the darkness, can you hear me now? Segui la mia voce, caro, ritorna da me. Torna da me, torna da me.”

Alana carefully opened the door and walked softly to Hannibal and placed a hand on his shoulder.

“You should go home Hannibal, get some rest.”

“I don’t want to leave him.”

“I know but he isn’t going to wake up tonight, the sedatives they are giving him are too strong, I can stay a while longer, they will call if anything changes. When he does wake up he is going to need you. Go home get some rest.”

He kissed Will’s hand and reverently placed it down on the bed. “You are right, I know,” Hannibal stood up brushed his hand through Will’s hair and then gently kissed his forehead. “I’ll be back caro, I promise, you rest.”

He and Alana made their way out of Will’s room, Alana caught his hand and pulled him into an embrace. “I’m so sorry Hannibal.”

“I know, thank you for being here.”

“Get some rest.”

They parted and she gently kissed him on the cheek, he smiled and pulled on his coat and made his way out, feeling as if he was being stretched to breaking the further he walked away from his caro.

His house was too still, too silent, he missed the constant noise from the grandfather clock. The rest of the clocks in his house had stopped due to Will's insistent presence. He stood in his hallway paralysed by his indecision. He couldn't feel Will here, not strongly enough. He was an indistinct shadow lurking behind him cold and dark it made Hannibal feel alone and tired.

He had driven to Will's, he was unconsciously drawn there. The house was so quiet and still, no dogs barking, no lights on and everything was just as if Will was out walking the dogs. He walked up the steps and felt a cold nose on his hand, he looked down at Winston who whined slightly. Alana and Margot said he kept running away to Will's, Hannibal smiled down at him. “Hi Winston, couldn't keep away either?”

Hannibal opened the door with the spare key and let himself and Winston in, he walked upstairs to the bedroom and opened the door. The new bed was set up with new sheets, expensive ones they looked soft, there were cushions placed against the perfectly fluffed pillows and a comforter positioned at the bottom of the bed. It looked pristine and out of place entirely, Hannibal smiled and closed the door. He made his way back downstairs to Will's makeshift bed in the back room, he sat down on the edge of the bed putting his overnight bag on the floor, Winston had curled up at the end of the bed and was softly snoring. Hannibal led down and looked at the framed drawing he had given Will which he had hung by the window so he could see it every morning and evening. He curled up fully clothed hugging one of the pillows staring, he could smell Will here and he sighed and fell into a fitful sleep.

He woke up to Winston nosing at his hand, “morning Winston,” he said and sat up his back ached.

He checked his phone, no calls from the hospital or Alana, it was still early. He got up and let Winston out, he would have to let Alana and Margot know he was here. He made his way to Will's kitchen and made himself some coffee. Sipping his coffee he sat on Will's porch watching Winston sniff around the front garden.

Alana greeted him as he arrived at the hospital, “They want to take him off the ventilator. He is showing signs of being able to breath on his own now.”

Hannibal smiled and followed Alana to Will's hospital room.

There were nurses and Doctors surrounding his caro and it made him intake a deep breath, Alana grabbed his hand. They watched as they removed the tube, Will's body made spluttering sounds but his eyes didn't open.

“We will start to wean him off the sedatives today, I am hoping he may be conscious in a few hours, we will do another scan this afternoon.” The Doctor and nurses left the room followed by Alana as there were papers to sign, she promised Hannibal she would take care of it.

Hannibal walked over to Will and brushed a hand against his forehead, “caro it’s good to see you breath on your own,” he watched as Will’s chest moved up and down, “Devi tornare da me, caro. Senza la tua voce, il tuo tocco, la tua presenza, trovo la vita insopportabile, amore mio. Per favore, segui la mia voce fino a me.” Hannibal sighed, “caro, Voglio dirti tutto, voglio dirti tutti i miei segreti, voglio che tu mi dica i tuoi. Voglio che tu mi veda, che tu mi conosca e voglio darti tutto. Io e te siamo talmente collegati che mi sembra di conoscerti da vite, che tu sia stato il mio caro ed io il tuo tesoro per molte vite. Non sono pronto a perderti in questa, ti ho appena trovato.”

He couldn’t stand it any longer, now that the tubes had been moved and he wouldn’t hurt him. Hannibal removed his coat and shoes, placing them on the chair. He then carefully climbed into the bed with Will wrapping himself around Will and placing his head on the dip of his shoulder. He closed his eyes breathing in the familiar smell.

“Tesoro, you are too heavy,” Hannibal’s eyes flew open, “and you snore.”

Hannibal grinned and looked at him, “I do not snore caro you are mistaken.” Hannibal kissed him, hands making their way to Will’s hair, “caro you came back to me.”

Will smiled, “you woke me” he croaked.

“Do you need water?”

“Yes, but stay here for a bit first, I don’t want you to get off me yet.”

“I thought I was heavy.”

“You are but I like it.”

Hannibal smiled and kissed Will again, slowly, tracing his fingers on the side of Will’s face. Eventually Hannibal removed himself from Will’s bed, he retrieved the plastic jug and poured some water into the plastic cup with a straw and held it up the Will’s lips, his other hand in his hair again, Will sipped it, “thanks.”

Hannibal kissed his forehead, “I’ll get the Doctor.”

“No, in a minute, I don’t want you to go.”

Hannibal smiled and complied, “caro, caro, caro,” Hannibal whispered into Will’s mouth willing the words to sink inside and heal him, “you came back to me.”

“Always Tesoro, can’t get rid of me that easily.”

Hannibal laughed and kissed Will again “I’m getting the Doctor, caro, I won’t be long.” He kissed Will on the forehead and went outside to find the Doctor.

Will was in and out of consciousness for the rest of the day, Hannibal refused to leave his side as when he had Will woke up and called for him with such desperation he pulled out his IV. Margot appeared with food and coffee, “not up to your usual standards but you need something.” He took it gratefully and thanked her as she lowered herself into the other chair, “how is he?”

“In and out, more out now but when he wakes up he seems more lucid.”

“That’s good. How are you? You looked exhausted.”

“I will be fine when he is.”

Margot smiled, “he will be okay, Alana said he is responding to the treatment.”

“He is and he is breathing on his own which is a relief and he knows his surroundings and who we all are.”

“You should get some rest Hannibal I can stay with him.”

“No its fine really, I don’t want him to wake up and find me not here, he didn’t react well last time. They said they would bring in a bed for me.”

“You have to use it though, Alana said you have been sleeping with him.”

Hannibal looked away, “he likes it when I’m close to him.”

Margot smiled and reached across and took Hannibal’s hand, “it will be alright Hannibal.”

He smiled at her, “I know.”

The door opened and Alana walked in, “hey, Jack is on his way over you might want to make yourself scarce Margot.”

“Yeah, I think that’s a good idea, I’ll go check on the dogs I’ll see you later,” she stood up and kissed Alana and then stroked the top of Hannibal’s head and placed gently kiss there, “try to rest.”

He nodded and thanked her.

Jack appeared half an hour later, he watched outside the door, looking in at Hannibal holding onto Will’s hand and whispering to him, he looked like he hadn’t left Will for days.

“Jack.”

“Alana, how is he?”

“Better, still asleep a lot but the last scan showed improvement.”

“I didn’t realise it was so serious between them.”

“Hannibal hasn’t left his side, he isn’t what you think he is Jack.”

Jack smirked and looked away from the window at Alana, “I didn’t say he was anything.”

“You made your feelings about him perfectly clear when I started treating him. His relationship with Will is his business.”

Jack held his hands up “I know, I know, I didn’t say anything.”

“You didn’t have to. Why don’t you wait here I’ll let Hannibal know you are here.”

Jack nodded and watched as Alana entered the room, she made her way to Hannibal and placed a gentle hand on his shoulder. Hannibal looked over his shoulder and saw Jack, he gave nothing away, which for Jack said it all. Hannibal stood, Alana took his seat, he kissed Will’s forehead and then made his way to the door, Jack stepped back to let him out.

“Agent Crawford.”

“Hannibal.”

“As you can see Will is awake at the moment, you may see him but do not stay long, he needs to rest.”

Jack eyed him, the tone in which Hannibal spoke was gentle enough and he looked tired but still there was something underneath, a steeliness that Jack could not ignore.

“I promise I will not tire him. Alana says he is improving.”

“Yes it’s slow but steady progress.”

“You look tired you should get some rest, Alana says you have not left him.”

Hannibal’s eyes reacted slightly to that, possible annoyance but it was a flicker that was soon extinguished.

“You do not need to concern yourself with me Agent Crawford, I will be fine.”

Jack walked in and carefully closed the door behind him, he walked to the other side of the bed from where Hannibal’s chair was. Will’s eyes were half closed, he looked pale with a sheen of sweat.

“How are you feeling?”

“Not really sure, they say I am improving though.”

“That’s good, your students miss you.”

Will managed a half smile which looked like it caused him pain, “I doubt that.”

“Well believe what you will, we all miss you. Beverley sends her love, she said she’ll come by later.”

“Tell her thanks.”

“You said it was flu Will.”

“I thought it was right up until I knew it wasn’t and then well…”

“I am just glad Alana found you.”

Will could tell even in his semi-conscious state that Jack was bothered by something, he kept looking at the door and the now empty chair.

“What is it Jack?”

Jack sighed, “I saw Hannibal, you and he are..?”

“None of your business Jack.”

“Fine, fine, I wasn’t going to pry I just… Anyway it’s good you have someone.”

Will attempted to laugh “we have a connection Jack, I can’t change that.”

“I just didn’t realise how serious it was that’s all.”

“You don’t need to think about it at all, Jack.”

“I know, look I just want you to get better that’s all, I just came to say I am glad you are okay and that if you need anything.”

“Thanks Jack.” Will was fading.

Hannibal who had been hovering outside the door re-entered, “I know, I know I’m going, feel better Will.” Jack walked towards the door as Hannibal made his way to Will where he gently caressed his forehead and placed a kiss on his brow then resumed his seat next to Will where he took his hand. Jack watched all this with a keen interest. “If you need anything, if he needs anything please let me know.”

Hannibal didn’t react at first and then slowly turned to face Jack not letting go of Will’s hand, “I am sure we will be fine I thank you for the offer.”

Jack nodded and left the room feeling as if he had been dismissed.

Will turned his head to look at Hannibal, “you look tired, you should go home get some proper sleep.”

“Do you want me to go?”

“I want you to sleep properly instead of climbing in this small bed and then not being able to move in the morning.”

Hannibal smiled, “are you calling me old?”

“You are the one who wouldn’t sleep in my bed and complains when you wake up in this one.”

“You like it when I climb in there with you.”

“That I cannot deny.”

Hannibal laughed and kissed Will’s hand, he then made his way onto the bed with Will, adjusting gently around him. “I saw the new one.”

Will smiled and closed his eyes, “you went to my house?” Feeling the comforting weight of Hannibal on him.

“I spent the night there before they took you off the ventilator. Winston and I slept in your uncomfortable bed.” Hannibal was tracing circles on Will’s chest and kissing the skin there.

Will opened his eyes and looked down at Hannibal confused, “you and Winston.”

“He ran away from Alana and Margot, I found him on your porch.”

Will smiled and this time it reached his eyes, “you slept in my uncomfortable bed with my dog.”

“Yes.”

“You are ridiculous.”

“You say that a lot.”

“Well you are. Did you like the new bed?”

Hannibal paused, “it looked incongruous.”

“That’s because Margot chose it.”

“You let Margot chose a bed we are planning on sharing.”

“Yes.”

“Why?”

“Because you would not have liked what I would chose, she has better taste than me. Did you like it?”

“I look forward to trying it with you in it, I am sure I will love it then.”

Will laughed, “You need to go home and sleep in your own bed I’ll be fine for one night I promise.”

“I don’t want to leave you, caro.”

“Tesoro, I am about to sleep again, you are exhausted please go and come back tomorrow, bring me something nice to eat, I miss your cooking.”

Hannibal felt his back ache and knew Will was right, “call me if you need me, I’ll tell the nurses to call me if you wake up in the night.”

“Okay.”

“I’ll stay here until you fall asleep”

Will smiled, “thank you, I love you Tesoro.”

“I love you too Caro...” Will closed his eyes and felt himself being pulled into sleep with the rhythmic stroking of Hannibal’s touch.

Hannibal stayed in the bed until he could hear the gentle snores of Will, his breathing was steady and calm. Hannibal gently and slowly removed himself from Will’s bed.

“Dormi bene e profondamente, caro, mio amore. Dormi e riposa e ritorna da me. Non sarò mai lontano da te.” Hannibal whispered and gently kissed Will’s lips, “Buonanotte amore mio.”

Beverley appeared at the hospital just before visiting hours were over, she was shocked at the sight of her friend, pale and clammy in the hospital.

“You should have called if you felt that bad, Will.”

Will smiled, “I didn’t really know I did feel that bad until it was too late, I thought I had flu.”

She smiled but she looked like she was going to cry, “you should have called.”

“I’m fine Bev, honestly, I will be okay, stop worrying.”

She made her way to Hannibal’s usual seat and sat down, “how do you feel?”

“Pretty terrible but they say I’m getting better, and hey I’m breathing on my own.”

“Where is Hannibal?”

“I told him to go and get some sleep he hasn’t left me in days.”

She smiled, “he’s got it bad.”

Will laughed, “I think we both do.”

“It’s good that you have someone, it’s about time.”

“Hey, it’s not been that long” even to Will this sounded half hearted.

Beverley cocked an eyebrow, “you have barely dated since Molly.”

“I’ve been busy.”

“Yeah busy being anti-social. Price is upset by the way.”

“About what?”

“He didn’t realise you liked guys as well, he said he would have made a move if he’d known.”

Will laughed at that, “he never asked.”

“I told him that it was more Hannibal than guys in general.”

“What do you mean?”

“Will you are a serial monogamist for starters and Price well, Price isn’t. Anyway after seeing you and Hannibal together I can see it’s more than just sex, I have never seen you like that with anyone, even Molly. You actually looked relaxed, I didn’t know you did relaxed.”

“He brings it out in me.”

“The sex is good though right?”

Will laughed but even in his ill state he couldn’t hide the blush, “yeah it is.”

“I knew it,” she laughed, “I knew it. You are lucky, good in bed, good in the kitchen, hasn’t left you even when you ended up in hospital because you are an idiot who can’t tell the difference between serious illness and the flu.”

“Wow, thanks.”

“Sorry. It’s good though seriously. I am looking forward to dinner I may have to bring someone with me as back up though, I’m not sure I could take it on my own!”

Will laughed, “are we that bad?”

“Yes and you know it and you love it.”

Will smiled again, “yeah I do.”

He went swimming first, he needed to stretch his muscles and knew if he didn’t physically exhaust himself he would never get any sleep. He would swim, he would go home, he would cook for Will and then he would sleep. This list of tasks soothed him, gave him purpose and distracted his mind from his worry, he had never worried before about someone like this. He had never felt this way before, this connection, this love was new and it terrified and excited him in equal measure. As he swam he thought about telling Will, once he was better, telling

him everything, revealing who he was. He played the reactions over and over in his mind, Will leaving, him having to leave, Will turning him in, the look on Jack's face as his suspicions were proved correct, Alana... Alana would be devastated. Would Will be surprised? Was there a part of him that already knew deep down, knew that his attacker was not the first person he killed? Would he ask him to stop? Would he be repulsed by the sight of a deeper darkness?

Hannibal checked his phone as he changed, no messages, he would ring the hospital when he got home to check in. There was just one message from Bedelia asking him to call if he needed her, anytime. That was uncharacteristically caring of her, he thought, he replied with a brief thank you.

Once he got home he made Will soup, he also took some homemade bread from the freezer to defrost for the morning. He rang the hospital and was told there was no change that Will was sleeping peacefully. Beverley had been by briefly before visiting hours ended, he knew Will would appreciate that.

He felt tired, bone aching tired so set an alarm for early in the morning and went to bed. He fell asleep as soon as his head hit the pillow.

The alarm on his phone had gone off and there were no new messages from the hospital. He stretched in the bed feeling rested for the first time in days. The ache in his chest was slightly less but still there, he missed Will. He showered and dressed feeling more like himself, he walked past the clock in his bedroom and didn't notice that it had started to work again, the sound was a part of a habitual memory of his life and it slid right past him.

He made his way to the kitchen and brewed coffee, he made himself some eggs which he ate quickly wanting to get back to the hospital. He took the food for Will from the fridge, slicing the homemade bread and wrapping it in brown paper. Feeding Will always made him feel better, he would enjoy watching Will eat, hopefully colour would soon return to his cheeks.

He arrived at the hospital, he could sense the atmosphere as he approached Will's room, the door was swinging as if someone had rushed from it, he could hear an alarm, he ran then to the door and was stopped by a nurse, he saw a through the door Will being surrounded by nurses and doctors. All breath left him, his heart felt like it had stopped as he was held back by three Orderlies from entering the room. He wanted to kill them, tear their limbs from them so he could get to his caro.

Eventually the doctor appeared, "what happened?" Hannibal's voice was raspy and cold.

"He stopped breathing again, we have put him back on the ventilator."

"I thought he was improving?"

"He was, but encephalitis can be tricky. We will scan him again in a few hours give him a chance to stabilise we have increased his dosage of steroids and he is on sedatives again."

"Can I see him?"

“Yes, do you want us to call Alana?”

“Yes, she would want to know, thank you.” Hannibal left the doctor and went in to see Will. He stood beside his bed, he placed the bag he had brought on the floor and watched as the ventilator made Will’s chest rise and fall with a loud suction noise. His hand reached to Will’s bare chest, he placed it gently on the skin letting it be moved but up and down, his skin felt cold it made Hannibal ache.

The darkness was back but it surrounded him with more distinction now, it had shape. There were trees, large and silhouetted, their branches stretched out all around him, grasping his limbs, digging in and scratching, pulling him into the soft earth beneath him. There were stars too, they shined through the gaps in the trees, almost engulfed by the darkness but not quite, small signs of rebellion giving light to the darkness. He could still hear the voice on the wind, surrounding him gently, it kissed his skin with a comforting weight.

There was a presence that was making itself seen through the branches, using them to make itself visible to Will. He knew who he was here, just, he was slightly more whole, it seemed like the presence was stopping him, temporarily, from being consumed by the earth beneath him. It wanted him here, held him so he could see it. The voice was stronger now, the language was strange but Will somehow could understand the meaning, the intended comfort and perhaps love it conveyed made his fear less.

The presence became larger and more distinct, it was getting closer. It was made of the darkness but it shone through it, a strange dark shine that made Will feel something, maybe cold he wasn’t sure. He watched as the presence became a figure, too long limbs stretching out, it had antlers which reached out into the branches, Will wasn’t sure what was branches and what was bone. He suddenly felt like he was impaled rather than held and he found it hard to breathe. The voice spoke louder with a calming tone that swam around him until he found his breath again, steady and deep.

Will wanted to speak to it but he couldn’t. The creature, now standing over him, antlers growing down towards him, cocked its head as if he knew Will wanted to speak. Will tried to mouth a word but wasn’t sure exactly where his mouth was anymore. He just needed to think a coherent thought, he needed to grasp at the light from the stars, piece it together to find a language this creature could understand.

The creature bowed its head and the antlers pierced Will’s skin and he felt the thick black looking blood ooze out into the bone of the antlers. He wanted to scream but he couldn’t find the sound. His eyes were closing if he still had them as he was further impaled on the antlers. Soon he would be burst, all his blood would explode from his body and cover this creature, it would be absorbed by it and Will suddenly found the thought comforting.

It would all be over then, he could finally be at one with the darkness, let it over take him merge with him so he could forget all he ever was and all he ever could be. Perhaps he would

be more with the darkness, something great and terrible that would no longer feel fear but be the cause of it. He wanted that, he wanted that strength, that terrible and wonderful power this creature coldly wielded.

He noticed the stars were getting fainter as the creature pushed itself further into Will, more holes in his skin where the darkness was seeping in as his blood seeped out. It felt euphoric, he knew it should be painful but it wasn't, he could feel the arousal all around him, through him, he could feel the creature's insistence and it made him ache for something he couldn't articulate. If he was going to die he wanted it to be like this, he wanted to be consumed and replaced with this hot breath-taking coldness that seared through him removing all breath from his body. The ache, oh god the ache felt heavenly even as he knew he was being dragged down to hell.

The voice was back then, kissing his skin, licking at the blood that left him. It was a divine voice that entered him and burned through him, it found his mouth and his tongue and caressed them, suddenly he felt as if the voice was coming from his own vocal chords even though the words were not his. He felt like he had been possessed, seduced and he no longer cared, he wanted it, he wanted to be made to ache and then to be sated and then made to ache again over and over in this dark forest with this creature and its voice.

Chapter End Notes

Translations by @alackofanythinghtosay who is as always amazing. I have left their notes because I find them really interesting.

Segui la mia voce, caro, ritorna da me. – Follow my voice, caro, come back to me.

Torna da me, torna da me. – Come back to me, come back to me.

Devi tornare da me, caro. Senza la tua voce, il tuo tocco, la tua presenza, trovo la vita insopportabile, amore mio. (Here I took the liberty to change the order of the expressions to make it sound a little more old-fashioned and romantic in Italian. Literally it should have been "Trovo la vita senza la tua voce, il tuo tocco, la tua presenza, insopportabile, amore mio" but I don't quite like the use of so much commas. - You need to come back to me caro, I find life without your voice, your touch, your presence unbearable, my love,

Per favore, segui la mia voce fino a me. - please follow my voice back to me.

Voglio dirti tutto, voglio dirti tutti i miei segreti, voglio che tu mi dica i tuoi. - I want to tell you everything, I want to tell you all my secrets, I want you to tell me yours.

Voglio che tu mi veda, che tu mi conosca e voglio darti tutto. - I want you to see me, I want you to know me, and I want to give you everything.

Io e te siamo talmente collegati che mi sembra di conoscerti da vite, che tu sia stato il mio caro ed io il tuo tesoro per molte vite. Non sono pronto a perderti in questa, ti ho appena trovato. - You and I are so connected, I feel like I have known you for lifetimes that you have been my caro and I your Tesoro for many lives, I am not ready to lose you in this one, I only just found you.

Dormi bene e profondamente, caro, mio amore. (Here I switched the words soundly=profondamente and well=bene, you can switch them back if you want). Dormi e riposa e ritorna da me. - Sleep soundly and well caro my love, sleep and rest and come back to me.

Non sarò mai lontano da te. - I will never be far from you.

Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

"He felt like he could hear and feel time passing, as if the time was scratching at his skin, grazing him with it a constant, clawing progress. He tried to follow its current, be dragged along with it towards the stars, towards the voice. If he could just hold on he could make it back, bloodied and bruised, but mostly whole."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Jack had brought Margot in for questioning. He had unofficially reopened her brother's case after Beverley's findings. With Will in the hospital Margot had no real back up. Jack wouldn't allow Alana to be there for the questioning so it was just Margot, her lawyer (the same serious looking man who had accompanied her previously) and Jack in the cold soulless room. Margot played with the ring on her finger she met Jack's eyes with a sly, gentle confidence that Jack could not help but find slightly alluring.

"Thank you for coming in Miss Verger." Jack tried to keep his tone smooth but he knew Margot wasn't falling for it.

"Anything I can do to help."

"I advised my client against this." Margot's lawyer spoke disapprovingly, "Miss Verger should not be put through any unneeded stress given her condition."

"I don't think any stress is ever needed and I'm not in a condition I'm just pregnant." Margot said this to Jack as she rubbed her bump and smiled at him. He was disarmed by her charm. "I have nothing to hide."

Jack could almost believe her. Almost. He had seen many a scared lioness backed into a corner and though she handled it with more grace than most she was still 'handling' it.

"Well I appreciate you coming in and we won't keep you longer than we have to."

"Thank you."

"We have uncovered some new evidence regarding how the tank may have broken." Jack paused to gauge her reaction, she tilted her head slightly, but that calm, serene expression remained fixed. "We believe it may have been tampered with."

She raised an eyebrow, "how?"

"Over a period of time the glass may have be scored causing it to weaken. Who would have had access to the tank or Mason's bedroom?"

"Anyone who works at the house would have been able to get in there I suppose. The maids obviously and then of course the company that maintained the tank. Wouldn't that be something they would notice if the glass was wearing?"

"We will be talking to them about that."

"You have not spoken to them?" The lawyer interjected, "perhaps you should speak to them before hauling my client in here."

Margot smiled and put a hand on her lawyers arm stopping him, "it's okay. Yes, if you are asking did I have access to Mason's room. I rarely went in there. I found that eel disturbing and did not like to be around it."

"You had access to it."

"Yes."

"As well as the household staff and tank maintenance company?"

"Yes I believe you requested a list when you were investigating this the first time round. Do you need another copy?" She said this without a trace of annoyance and Jack was vaguely impressed.

He opened the file in front of him and brought out the list, "this list? Can you check it's still accurate?"

Margot took the list from Jack and scanned it, "yes I do believe that is correct though I cannot remember everyone's name from the maintenance company so I cannot with absolute certainty speak to that but if that is the list they gave me to give you then as far as I know that's everyone." She handed the list back.

"Did you know very much about the tank?"

"In what regard?" Margot's voice was smooth.

"Did you know anything about its construction or installation?"

"No. Mason dealt with that."

"What about feeding the eel? Did you know how to feed the eel?"

"No, that was all done by the maintenance company they would come in regularly."

"You never had anything to do with the tank?"

The lawyer interjected, "my client has already answered that question Agent Crawford."

Margot smiled at Jack and he sighed, “perhaps you should just get to the point Agent Crawford. Are you accusing me of something or not?” Margot said this in a gentle tone of voice but her eyes never wavered from Jack's. “Should I be worried?”

“We are just trying to establish a few things, I have no reason at this point to accuse you of any crime no. We are still investigating however so I would appreciate it if you let us know of any plans you might have to leave the Baltimore area.”

“Where would I go? In my condition.” She smiled and Jack found himself disarmed.

“If anything comes up, please let us know,” he handed her his card which she did not move to take, the lawyer picked it up and put in his pocket.

“We will inform you Agent Crawford should Miss Verger have any plans to leave the area.” The lawyers tone was crisp and cold, Margot continued to smile serenely.

“Thank you for your time Miss Verger, we will be in touch. If you think of any more relevant information please do not hesitate to contact me.”

Margot stood up as the lawyer packed up his notepad and pen, “of course.” Margot said sweetly.

Alana had been waiting outside the interrogation room with Beverley who was attempting, unsuccessfully, to get her to stop pacing up and down.

“Why is this happening now? It’s like he waited until Will was in the hospital to do this so she wouldn’t have an ally in the room.” Beverley watched her complete another pace up and down the hallway.

“Jack could not have anticipated Will being in the hospital.”

“I don’t know he works him so hard I blame him for that too if I am honest.”

“Alana don’t, I know you are worried but honestly it will be alright. If Margot says she has nothing to hide then she has nothing to hide.” Beverley tried to ignore the way Alana bristled slightly at that.

“I just don’t understand why Jack can’t just let it go.”

“Because he is Jack.” Alana nodded in agreement.

“Are you going to see Will later? Hannibal could probably do with being relieved I just want to get Margot home whenever she’s done.”

“Yeah I was going to go after this, how is he doing?”

“Still the same he is on the ventilator still, they are going to scan him again this evening in the hope they can take him off tomorrow.”

“How’s Hannibal?” The last time Beverley had been there he looked haunted.

“The same, worried, trying not to show it.”

Beverley smiled at that.

Margot appeared followed by her lawyer and Jack, Alana instantly made her way to Margot and hugged her, gently leading her away from Jack and out of the building. The lawyer followed a few steps behind.

Jack looked at Beverley, “so what did Alana say?”

Beverley rolled her eyes, “nothing, she said nothing just that she wished you would drop it. She is worried about Will too.”

Jack didn’t say anything and just walked silently away leaving Beverley thinking about where on earth all of this was going and that they really needed Will to wake up now.

Will was beginning to remember, to find his way back up from the darkness, if he followed just the voice he could see the stars again. He concentrated on the voice, he tried to use the pleasure it gave him as a guide to find himself again molecule by molecule. It was a painstaking process that made him feel like he was trying to find some semblance of structure in thick liquid tar. The voice was insistent though it was helping him come back, he was sure it was helping.

He felt like he could hear and feel time passing, as if the time was scratching at his skin, grazing him with it a constant, clawing progress. He tried to follow its current, be dragged along with it towards the stars, towards the voice. If he could just hold on he could make it back, bloodied and bruised, but mostly whole.

By the time Beverley got to the hospital later that day she found Hannibal asleep at Will’s bedside, she was loath to wake him so she hovered outside for a moment and then decided that the coffee she had brought was getting cold.

She gently pushed the door open and walked in, she placed the coffees' on the table by Will’s bed. She gently touched his forehead with her hand, it felt warm and clammy. She listened to the insistent sucking in and out of the ventilator for a moment, her hand still on Will’s forehead. She leant down and gently kissed his skin, “wake up prince” she whispered.

She stepped away, knelt down and gently placed her hand on Hannibal’s leg, “Hannibal,” she spoke softly, “wake up.” He slowly opened his eyes and then smiled when he saw her, “at least I can wake one of you up. I brought coffee.”

“Thank you Beverley.”

She smiled and stood up, passed him a coffee and walked around to the other chair on the other side of Will’s bed and sat down sipping from the coffee cup. “How is he? Alana says he is having another scan?”

“The same, yes in about an hour so I am glad you woke me.”

“Alana sends her love by the way, Jack brought Margot into questioning so she wanted to take her straight home. She says she will call later and be by tomorrow before work.”

“Jack brought Margot in?”

“Yeah, we found some new evidence he wanted to talk to her about. Probably best to ask Alana, I don’t think Jack would want me talking about it sorry.”

Hannibal nodded, “that is fair I don’t want to put you in a difficult position.”

“Thank you for that.” She sighed, “I know this is a ridiculous thing to say but I miss him. Will always knows what to do, what to say. Alana was a mess today and all I could think was, I wish Will was here.”

Hannibal smiled, “he does have a way of fixing everyone around him, just not himself.”

“Ain’t that the truth! I wish he’d called me when he was sick, or Alana. He never thinks to call anyone, ask anyone for help. I’m glad he’s found someone who wants to take care of him, he needs it.”

Hannibal laughed, “I’m glad you approve. I just wish I had not been away, I should have known something was wrong when he didn’t call, but he knew I would be away from my phone a lot but still I should have sensed it.”

“Don’t blame yourself, we were here and we missed it. I know he will be okay Hannibal he is stronger than he looks, stubborn too.”

“Yes definitely stubborn.”

“Is there anything you need? Do you want me to stay after his scan so you can get some rest?”

It was a tempting offer but he knew he couldn’t leave, “no, its fine, I am glad you came by though it’s nice to have the company. It’s nice to meet someone from Will’s life he doesn’t seem to have many people he wants me to meet.”

“He doesn’t have a lot of friends, Alana and I are really all he has. I think as well he wants to keep you to himself, trying to get anything out of him about you two was difficult!”

Hannibal laughed again and felt his heart lift at her easy company, she was so like Will he could see why they got on. “Well you have me all to yourself now so why don’t you ask me?!”

“Well I am not going to turn down that offer!” She laughed and settled down in her chair, thinking about where to begin.

“What are we going to do Margot?” Alana was pacing while Margot nursed her tea in the arm chair, all of Will’s dogs were surrounding her. They seemed to be forming a permanent protective circle around her in his absence.

“Nothing Alana, there is nothing to do. My lawyer says they have nothing just theories, no actual hard evidence. I am co-operating which is what I should be doing. We just have to wait and see what happens.”

“How can you be so calm?”

“Would you rather I panic? Stress out the baby? You seem to be panicked enough for all three of us. I know you are worried about me and about Will but it will be alright I promise.” Margo absently stroked Winston who needed extra attention these days and would usually run away if Margot wasn’t there back to Will’s house.

Alana stopped pacing and looked at Margot, “no I don’t want you to stress out the baby obviously. I just don’t know how you can be so calm, how do you know everything is going to be okay? Will is in trouble he might have brain damage even if he does come out of this and you Margot well you did do it.”

That was the first time that Alana had actually referenced Margot’s confession since the day she told her the full story. Margot winced slightly and she smiled. “I did nothing he didn’t deserve that someone else given the chance wouldn’t have done. I wasn’t his only enemy.”

“Are you implying we frame someone else?”

Margot sighed and put her tea down on the table, she stood up with some difficulty her back aching and shooed the dogs away. She made her way to Alana and took her hands in hers, “no I’m not saying that, at least not yet, I’m just saying there is no need to panic.”

“You have a plan though?”

“I have a back up, “ - she paused, “possibility. But we won’t need it. My lawyer is very good, he has the whole of the Verger company resources behind him. It will be fine. As for Will he’s strong I know he can come out of this, he has to. Who else is going to keep us all together?”

Alana smiled but there were tears in her eyes, “I miss him.”

“I know, but he’s still here.” Margot reached a hand to brush away Alana’s tears and gently kissed her on the cheek, “I hate to see you like this my love, please try and be calm,” she kissed her lips cupping her face and Alana could feel herself uncoiling at the touch.

“You’re right, as long we have each other everything will be fine.”

“Exactly. Why don’t you sleep in tomorrow? I am sure Hannibal won’t mind, we can get someone else to go in. Bev maybe? You need to rest darling.”

Alana smiled, “I’ll wait to hear from Hannibal about the scan, then I’ll decide.”

“Okay.” Margot kissed her again, “let me pour you wine so I can live vicariously through you.”

Alana laughed, “Yeah sounds good.” She watched as Margot walked away to the kitchen and sighed, she could feel herself being pulled further into this but then she had come this far. She closed her eyes, breathe, she thought. When she opened her eyes Winston was staring up at her, his tail wagging and she smiled.

Hannibal was pacing, Beverley was watching him pace and getting dizzy.

“Hannibal, you are making me dizzy,” she had stood up and put her hand on his shoulder and he stopped and smiled weakly.

“Sorry.”

“It won’t be much longer.”

Eventually Beverley saw a bed being rolled down the hallway with Will in it and not on a ventilator. She hit Hannibal so hard on the arm that he jumped. “Look he’s breathing on his own.”

As that bed got closer followed by the Doctor they could see Will clearly groggy but his eyes open, he looked at them both, trying to get them into focus. A realisation came over his face at seeing them together. “Oh no” his voice raspy.

Hannibal got closer and put his hand on Will’s forehead and then kissed him gently on the lips, “what is it caro?”

“How long have you and,” he coughed, “Bev been alone?”

Hannibal laughed, “caro, I have told her none of your secrets I promise.”

Beverley laughed, “I tried but I couldn’t get much.”

“That’s what I was afraid....” Will started coughing again.

“Sssshhh caro, save your strength.”

“We need to get him back to his room, you can go in, in a few minutes.” The Doctor’s tone was gentle and he watched as Hannibal kissed Will’s forehead before the orderlies took him away.

“What happened?” Beverley asked.

“He woke up during the scan so we took him off the ventilator and then scanned him again. I am going to go and review the results now but I would say it looks good. I am keeping him on the same dosage of steroids and anti virals, he will need less sedatives now but he will still be groggy for a while. I will come and talk to you when I have had a look at the scan results.”

“Thank you Doctor.” Hannibal shook his hand.

“My pleasure, you can go on in now.”

“Thank you. Hannibal do you mind if I come in for a bit? I won’t stay long, I’ll call Alana and Margot as well for you if you like?”

Hannibal grasped her hand, “of course come in for as long as you like.”

She smiled and they both entered the room. Will was still pale and with a drip in his arm, his eyes were half closed but he was awake and it was a sight that made both Hannibal and Beverley smile.

“I missed you buddy, glad you are back. Don’t talk if it hurts hun,” Will smiled at her, “don’t worry I didn’t tell too many embarrassing stories about you to Hannibal.” She winked and he rolled her eyes. “I’ll come by in the morning okay, be awake, none of this slipping into coma’s, once is funny, twice is just attention seeking!”

Will attempted to laugh and started coughing, Beverley took his hand and squeezed it. She grabbed Hannibal before she left and hugged him, “if you need anything call me. I’ll let Margot and Alana know the good news.”

“Thanks Beverley.”

She winked at Will before she left and he smiled. Hannibal went to stand closer to Will and put his hand through his hair, “caro, I missed you.” Will had closed his eyes and but smiled at the sound of Hannibal’s voice, “Dormi bene e profondamente, caro, mio amore. Dormi e riposa e ritorna da me.”

Will hummed in approval and contentment, Hannibal continued stroking his hair until he fell asleep.

After a week Will was released from hospital and Hannibal had driven him home, he wanted to take him back to his house but Will insisted on going home. Will was still unsteady on his feet and pale, his coordination was not quite back but the doctor had said it would return in time, his brain just needed rest.

“Do you want to go upstairs, sleep on the proper bed?” Hannibal asked as he helped Will inside, he looked exhausted from the drive and the short walk up the stairs to the door.

“Yeah I guess, if you come with me.”

Hannibal smiled, “how could I refuse such an offer?”

They carefully climbed the stairs together. Hannibal opened the door to the bedroom and Will looked at the bed which Margot had chosen and laughed. “You are right, completely incongruous.”

“Come on before you dismiss it lie in it your back will thank you. As will mine.”

Hannibal pulled back the covers so Will could sit down on the bed. “It is soft, and comfy, seems weird.”

“It’s what most people have Will.”

Will looked down at Hannibal who was untying his shoes for him, shoe laces seemed like a complicated thing when he left the hospital and even more so now. Hannibal gently removed each shoe and put them to the side he then helped Will sit back and lifted his legs on to the bed, pulling the covers back over him.

“I’m not most people.”

“That you are not Caro, that you are not.” Hannibal removed his jacket and put it on the chair, he removed his shoes and placed them next to Will’s, which Will found oddly comforting, and then he led down in the bed next to him. “This is much better.”

Will looked at Hannibal in this giant bed and laughed, “you are too far away Tesoro, come closer.”

Hannibal smiled and obliged by wriggling closer and cuddling up next to Will his arm across his chest, Will kissed the top of his head.

“What did you dream about? Did you dream?” Hannibal’s voice was almost a whisper.

Will sighed and closed his eyes trying to remember, “I’m not sure. It’s all a blur, there was darkness, indistinct shapes, I feel like I can remember hearing your voice calling me back but I don’t know.”

“I spoke to you all the time, I wanted to guide you back to me.”

Will smiled and kissed Hannibal’s head again, “it worked,” there was pause and then “have you spoken to Alana?”

“Will.”

“I know you said not to worry but I do worry as you won’t let me talk to Jack I just want to know if anything has changed?” Will’s hand was on the small of Hannibal’s back gently

making circles.

Hannibal leant into his touch, "I spoke to her yesterday nothing has changed, Jack has not spoken to them since Margot was questioned again. You know all they know and all I know."

"I might call Bev."

"No, that would put her in a very difficult position. She can't talk about it."

"Hmmm, I don't like that you two are a team." Will said only half joking.

"I like her, she's sweet, she was good to you and me when you were in hospital."

"Hmmm," Will said suspiciously, "she just wants to check you out."

"That's fine, she can. When you are better I still want to have her round for dinner."

"Yeah sure," Will sounded unconvinced.

Hannibal laughed gently, "you know as much as I would love to live in a bubble with just you and me, there are people who care about you caro and want to spend time with you. I thought it would be easier to do that with me rather than on your own." He leant up and kissed Will gently on the lips, "if I could I would keep you all to myself."

Will smiled and kissed him back, "I think I like this bed. We could just stay here you and me forever in this bed. No Jack, no Alana or Margot, no Bev."

"What about your dogs?"

"You've already slept with Winston."

Hannibal laughed and kissed him again, "no dogs on this bed Will."

Will smiled, "we'll see."

Alana and Margot arrived an hour later, their car woke Hannibal from his doze and he looked up at Will's sleeping face and kissed his lips gently to wake him, "caro wake up your family is back."

Will groaned and then smiled kissing Hannibal gently on the lips as he awoke from his sleep, "help me get up?"

"Of course." Hannibal sat up and got off the bed walked around to Will, he pulled back the covers and moved Will's legs so he was sitting with his feet on the floor, Will put his arm around Hannibal's shoulder who gently helped him to stand. "Okay?"

"Just let me get my balance," Will swayed against Hannibal but after a moment found his balance and they walked down the stairs together.

“How’s the new bed?” Margot asked as the dogs raced towards Will.

“Good, thank you.” Will smiled at Margot and then he greeted his pack who were gingerly milling around him as if they sensed he was still shaky on his feet.

“Will, go sit down, I’ll make us all tea.” Hannibal gently nudged him towards the sofa and Will sat down.

“Did you bring that expensive stuff you left last time? I am afraid I’ve been craving it!” Margot smiled and Hannibal nodded that he had and they both went into the kitchen to make tea.

Alana sat down opposite Will who was scratching Winston’s ear, the dogs’ tail was thumping against the floor in ecstasy. “Nice to see you home.”

“Good to be here, thanks for taking care of this lot.”

“Winston kept running back here trying to find you, he would usually just find Hannibal.”

Will smiled, “yeah he said.”

“How are you feeling?”

“Still tired and a bit unsteady, it will pass. What about you? Hannibal won’t tell me anything. What’s going on with Jack?”

Alana sighed, “you should focus on getting better Will.”

“Alana just tell me what’s happening, what did Jack question Margot about?”

Alana gave in knowing it was pointless to resist, “he asked her about the tank and the evidence Bev found of tampering. He hasn’t been in touch since, Bev can’t talk about it with me.”

“She can talk about it to me.”

“Will seriously just focus on getting better, we don’t expect you to get involved and I know Hannibal doesn’t want you getting stressed.”

Will smiled as much as he loved being taken care of he knew that when it came to this Hannibal would not win, “I will worry more if I don’t do something.”

Alana paused and looked at him, tears in her eyes, “I missed you.”

Will smiled back, “I missed you too.”

Hannibal had driven Will, begrudgingly, in to work under the pretence of wanting to collect some things so he could do some marking and lesson prep for when he did officially return to work. He was sure Hannibal did not entirely believe this excuse but he had given in because of his need to make Will happy. Hannibal insisted Will would call him at lunch and if he wanted to go home then Hannibal would come and get him. Hannibal had walked him inside the building and reluctantly left placing Will's homemade lunch in the staff room fridge.

Once Will had finally gotten rid of Hannibal he made his way down to the lab to find Bev who was waiting for him, knowing he would be down here as soon as he could.

"Hi Will," Bev was looking down a microscope and did not even look up when Will walked in knowing it was him from his footsteps, slow and careful at the moment. He had refused a walking stick, he didn't want it to become an affectation.

"Hi Bev." Will walked to the nearest stool and perched on it, waiting for her to finish.

Eventually Bev looked up at Will and smiled, "Jack told me not to talk to you about it I think he is suspicious of your allegiances."

"I don't have allegiances."

"Yeah right, try that again with more conviction." Bev reached into a drawer and removed a file and walked over to Will, she placed it on one of the empty autopsy tables Will was sat next to. "I can't talk about it, with you or Alana, I definitely cannot give you the file, or a copy of the file. So we are clear, I can't do any of those things. Jack would not just fire me he would eviscerate me and I don't want Price or Zeller doing my autopsy." She smiled and left the file where it was and then went back to her microscope, she sighed, "goddam it Will, you need to leave this has just stopped working."

Will laughed, "coincidence! I'm nowhere near it!"

"It's brand new!"

Will stood up and wobbled momentarily and then walked over to Bev and kissed her on the cheek, "thank you."

"Take your interference and go away," Bev smiled and hit him gently on the shoulder.

Will took the file and left to go to his classroom. He closed the door and switched all the main lights off, he went to his desk putting the lamp on and he spread out the pictures. Will breathed in a deep breath, steadied himself on the edge of his desk with both hands and closed his eyes allowing the pendulum to swing in one swift motion.

I stand in Mason Verger's lavish bedroom, the bright but muted light from the tank fills the room. The taste of trepidation is thick on my tongue, I am focused on every sound and movement in the room. The steady snores from the bed continue for some time, I need to make sure, it is becoming a rite now to stand and listen to him sleep. I tell myself this is so

that Mason's subconscious will get used to my presence so this can be done quicker each night. It isn't. It is because it gives me a sense of power and control that I am sorely lacking when it comes to Mason. The game of push and pull that I always seemed to lose no matter what. Standing in the light of the room I listen to my brother sleep. I feel pieces of myself slowly coming together. I slip the blade of the small Xacto knife I hold in my hand in and out. I smile a sure smile, a purposeful smile.

Slowly, almost reverently, I kneel down at the edge of the tank, the eel slithers by and makes me shiver. I take a deep breath and think of all the times I used a knife like this to harm myself as a way of beating him to it and as a release. That's why I've chosen this knife, I am truly taking my power back now. Elevating this instrument above self-harm. I scratch carefully and slowly along the same line I have etched every night for the past month, my eyes roll back in pleasure as I do this and I smile. My fingers itch to run along the groove, they hover just over it and I imagine the feel of the indentation in my head. I stand and repeat the ritual on four other points along the edge.

I stand, my breathing heavier, a slight sheen of sweat covers my skin, I watch the eel for a few moments and then I silently slip out of the room.

Will opens his eyes and sighs, he reads Bev's report and it corroborates his theory. He sits down on his chair and closes his eyes again. This time he imagines Hannibal's smile, his voice and gentle Italian words wash over him. He conjures his face in front of his as he leans in to kiss him, he can feel his breath close to his face seeing all the deep lines in Hannibal's skin, a map of his experience. Will imagines tracing his finger along every single one and absorbing the story that created it as he does, so he knows everything, so Hannibal's story is his own and his own story is Hannibal's. He imagines Hannibal's face dissolving as it edges closer, each atom bonding with his, becoming the same person.

Hannibal sighs and checks his watch, realises he isn't wearing one because he was with Will and smiles. He opens his desk drawer, which contains a box with several constantly rotating compartments that wind his watches while he isn't wearing them. He picks one and puts it on his wrist enjoying the feeling of having a watch back on his wrist.

It's been two hours, only two hours and he misses Will it makes his skin itch how much he misses him.

He came back to the shop to try and do some work, he is behind on his latest commission. He is staring at the drawing and all the pieces he has found so far for it, he is looking for more pieces on his tablet on eBay. His concentration is wavering. He closes his eyes for a moment and leans back in his chair and imagines Will's face close to his own as if he is about to kiss him, he imagines the storm blue eyes and the intelligence shining through, he imagines the soft, pale skin of his face, the smile that makes his heart burst every time he sees it. He imagines tracing his fingers over the skin, feeling the smooth softness of it, the bristles of his beard, he wishes he could absorb all the pain in those eyes, all the years of isolation. He

imagines his own face dissolving as he edges closer to Will, each of his atoms bonding with his, becoming the same person.

His phone rings and shakes him out of his revelry, he smiles its Will.

“Hello Will,” he leans back in his chair and closes his eyes again imagining Will’s face.

“Hi Hannibal, thank you for my lunch its delicious,” he was eating it as his desk while looking at the pictures of Mason Verger’s mangled corpse, he realised this is not what most people would do.

“I am glad you are eating and enjoying it.”

“What are you doing? Getting much work done?”

Hannibal could almost hear the smirk in his voice, “no I keep getting distracted.”

“Yeah?”

Hannibal smiles at the innocent tone, “you are a constant distraction even when you aren’t here my caro.”

“I would apologise but, well, I like distracting you.”

Hannibal smiled, “what are you doing?”

A pause, a decision, “looking at the Mason Verger file.”

“Will.”

“I know, I know but you knew I would so I figured I would just come clean.”

“And?”

“I have realised that most people don’t eat lunch while looking at pictures of mangled corpses.”

“You are not most people. What do you think?” A sigh, chewing and then a garbled reply which Hannibal cannot understand, he pinches his nose, “most people also don’t eat while they talk, especially on the phone.”

“I thought you wanted me to eat.”

“Chew Will, you need to chew.”

Will laughed and finished his mouthful, “sorry your cooking shouldn’t be so good.”

“What did you think?”

“I told you it’s delicious.”

“Will.”

“Sorry, okay I have finished now. Nothing that surprises me is what I think.”

“What does that mean? Is there enough evidence to charge Margot?”

“Not yet, I’ve put some pieces together but Jack hasn’t yet and he doesn’t know I have looked at the file again. He doesn’t want Bev to talk to me about it either, she said something about questioning my allegiances.”

Hannibal snorted, “well you certainly don’t owe Jack any allegiance.”

“Okay so I thought you didn’t like him but that confirms it.”

“Sorry, I just don’t entirely trust him.”

“He says the same about you.”

“I get the feeling he says the same about everyone.”

“True.”

“So what are you going to do?”

“Nothing at the moment, just keep an eye on things. Now that I am informed I can keep a better hold of the situation. I know you didn’t want me involved but I honestly feel better being involved, I like to have control.”

“I know.”

“I don’t when it comes to you.”

“Yes you do. Even when I blindfold you, I am completely at your mercy Will Graham I would do anything you ask of me and you know it.” He hadn’t meant to say it but it was true, he wanted to give Will the truth, he had decided he would, it just needed to be done in stages.

Will smiled and closed his eyes and sighed, “I would do anything for you as well, you know that.”

Hannibal smiled, hearing those words gave him a glimmer of hope. “I do now.”

“I miss you.”

“I miss you too caro. Voglio dirti tutti i miei segreti, amore mio, usciranno dalla mia bocca spontaneamente. Spero solo che tu possa custodirli per me, spero tu possa accettarli. Spero che tu possa accettare me.”

“Tesoro I missed your voice. Your words.”

“Le mie parole sono tue, ogni volta che le desideri puoi prenderle dalla mia bocca.”

“Can I come to yours tonight?”

“Of course my love.”

Will smiled, “let me organise the dogs, can you pick me up?”

“Yes, what time?”

“Five?”

“Perfect.”

“See you then, my Tesoro, I love you.”

“I love you too.”

The moment they walked through the door of Hannibal’s house Will pushes him against the door and kisses him, hands roaming trying to find skin under too many layers of clothing.

“Will,” Hannibal manages between attacks.

“You know you said you would do anything for me?” Will said this into Hannibal’s neck, hands had slid around to Hannibal’s ass and were gently squeezing it.

Hannibal let out a breath, “yes.”

“I want to fuck you Tesoro, would you let me?”

Hannibal felt like the ground below him suddenly melted away from him and he grabbed Will’s head and pulled him closer to kiss him, “I thought you would never ask.”

Will smiled and broke apart from Hannibal, “upstairs”.

Will was mesmerised. Hannibal was naked beneath him, Will’s fingers were slick and pushing inside him, Hannibal moaned and breathed out Will’s name like a benediction. Will took a deep breath and pushed another finger inside, the feeling of the rings of muscle constricting around his fingers made him gasp. Scissoring his fingers slightly he felt the muscle give, he pushed in further, that’s when he felt it, and brushed up against Hannibal’s prostate he was rewarded with another moan. Hannibal bucked up against him then and he pulled his fingers out and then pushed them back in again with a swift fluid motion, widening them as he went.

“More, please Will, fuck.”

God he loved it when Hannibal swore it sounded like a call to the gods when he swore, a sacred prayer. Will smiled and added another finger, there were three now and he watched as they entered Hannibal, he could feel Hannibal’s hole loosening around them and it made him

gasp again. He could do this all night, his other hand pulled the foreskin back on Hannibal's cock and grasped it. This caused Hannibal to swear again and Will moaned at the sound. Hannibal's hands were gripping the sheets in balled up ecstasy, his eyes were rolled back in his head and Will was captivated. He had seen Hannibal come, but this was different, he had never taken his time before. He was usually blindfolded and just felt him come but to see him come apart like this Will could fast see becoming addictive.

He was painfully hard himself now just witnessing this beautiful scene. Will wanted to live in this moment for the rest of his life, his mind a joyous blank of pleasure. He stroked Hannibal's cock at the same pace he pushed his fingers inside and Hannibal moaned.

"Will, please.."

Will smiled, "say it I want to hear you say it" his commanding voice surprised both of them and Hannibal moaned in pleasure.

"Caro, please fuck me caro."

"Tesoro, yes."

Hannibal lifted his hips even higher, Will grabbed a pillow and placed it underneath Hannibal whose legs were now wrapped around him. Will lined up his cock against Hannibal and pushed inside feeling the muscles stretch. Will was slow at first, he was torn between looking at Hannibal who was losing all of his control and gasping Will's name and looking at his cock disappear inside Hannibal. Will moved his hips slightly, angling himself so he was against Hannibal's prostate, "fuuuuuccck" Hannibal cried out.

Gripping Hannibal's ass he started to fuck him harder as Hannibal moaned and shouted Will's name, Will could feel he was going to come and soon. The room was filled with obscene noises of skin against skin, moans and groans of pleasure. Will could have stayed there forever listening to this glorious cacophony.

Eventually he came and fucked Hannibal through his orgasm, who came untouched and shouting "caro."

Will slipped out of Hannibal and collapsed beside him, "Fuck Tesoro that was amazing."

Hannibal smiled and reached a hand over to Will's face and stroked his cheek, "caro, caro you will be the death of me."

Will smiled and leant across to kiss Hannibal slowly.

Chapter End Notes

Voglio dirti tutti i miei segreti, amore mio, usciranno dalla mia bocca spontaneamente. Spero solo che tu possa custodirli per me, spero tu possa accettarli. - I want to tell you

all my secrets my love, they will spill out from my mouth unbidden. I just hope you can keep them for me, I hope you can accept them. I hope you can accept me.

Spero che tu possa accettare me. -I hope you can accept me.

Le mie parole sono tue, ogni volta che le desideri puoi prenderle dalla mia bocca. - My words are yours anytime you want them you can take them from my mouth.

Translations by the wonderful @alackofanythngtosay

Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

"Will had made his way slowly and quietly to the back of the shop, pulling the curtain just enough to slip through. Leaning against the archway of the entrance to the back room Will took in the sight. Hannibal was deep in concentration. Will watched hands and lithe fingers making tiny, exact adjustments and marks on the paper. Hannibal's hair was also falling slightly in front of his face as he bent over his work in concentration. He looked completely focused and in his own world. Will could watch him all day. "

Chapter Notes

Make sure to read the translations at the end they are integral to the story. As always big thanks to my translator @alackofanythinghtosay for her amazing work.

There is going to be angst coming (it will be happy ending but its going to be a journey!)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Jack was reading the incident report from Hannibal's attack. Margot's file was next to it on his desk. He trusted neither of these people, he was fairly convinced one of them was a murderer and the other was definitely hiding something. He sighed and then took a sip of his coffee. Alana, of course, vouched for both of them. Then again Alana had slept with both of them, she didn't think he knew about Hannibal but he did. He sighed again. There was a lot he knew that Alana didn't.

When he first met Hannibal he had thought that something about him didn't sit quite right. The calm he had exhibited after his attack was of the practiced kind, not the shock calm that can overcome people after trauma. Jack had been quietly looking into Hannibal ever since he met him, so far there wasn't a huge amount. He had moved here a few years ago established himself very quickly, he was well thought of, well liked, had many connected friends.

Very well connected, Jack thought. The moment Hannibal had been taken in after his attack and questioned the most prominent defence lawyer in Baltimore had appeared, wearing a very nice watch, and put up a wall around Hannibal so thick it would take a bulldozer to get through, *or a constant and slow pecking and cracking*. So that is what Jack had done, he had been patient and kept his ear to the ground, listening and paying attention.

Now there was Margot who was with Alana. Hannibal still considered Alana a very close friend. She was bait and Jack knew it. If he could make it seem as if Margot was in danger

of being arrested, something that would directly affect Alana, perhaps Hannibal would do something. Oh how Jack wanted to see what Hannibal would do. *A dangerous game perhaps, but I know I can catch him.*

He had not anticipated Will. He had asked Will to look into Lecter and he had, claiming there was nothing there. Currently Will was refusing to talk about it and avoiding Jack at all costs. Jack was worried Will was in too deep, the connection between them had been palpable. He trusted Will to know what he was doing, he just hoped he was right. Hannibal was definitely in love he just hoped Will wasn't, *love makes us blind and foolish*, Jack thought.

So he would have to keep to his back-up plan. Alana and Margot were key he was sure. Jack had no interest in actually prosecuting a pregnant woman who may have killed her brother, if she hadn't someone else would have and it couldn't have happened to a nicer guy. He just needed to make Hannibal believe he was serious, he needed to make Will think he was serious. If he could convince Will, then Hannibal might do something.

He looked at Margot's file again, he knew that Bev had given Will a copy. She was not nearly as sneaky as she thought. Jack could see it, he could see that Margot had been patient and constant, she had weakened that tank over months. He just needed to find what she had used, that would be the next step. He stood up and made his way down to the lab to talk to Bev.

Hannibal smiled as he opened the package the final piece for his commission had arrived. It was perfect, everything was now in place for him to begin constructing the watch. He had decided on hand painting the face, he was basing the design on the classic three dial design for day of the week, month and date. Most other watchmakers he knew did all their designs solely on the computer creating a completely digital design that was then printed. Hannibal always started with pen to paper making use of his engineering degree to produce precise technical drawings.

He would start with a perfect circle, measured with as much accuracy as possible to the size of the dial. Then he find the exact spacing of the numbers of the dial, figuring how much space would be taken up by the numbers so he could divide up the remaining space for the three dials in the lower part of the circle. It was painstaking and involved double, triple checking his measurements. The final design was run through a computer programme which corrected any inaccuracies but it was a matter of pride that they were always within point of a millimetre and few and far between. The programme had been created for him by a client as a present for finding his wife's engagement ring - a square cut vintage diamond and sapphire ring.

He was deep in thought, music playing as it always was when he worked. Will was finally feeling better and back to work, Hannibal's constant worry had eased. They were getting

back to a groove that he enjoyed. Finally his mind was able to focus on work and he felt at more at peace. He loved the accuracy of his work, how his mind had to be clear of everything else in order to achieve what he wanted.

As when Will first appeared in his shop, Hannibal had not heard him open the door. Will was being purposefully quiet. He knew Hannibal had told him not to come to the shop anymore but Will figured a short visit would be fine, he gave the grandfather clock a wide berth, smiling at how it now took up a large proportion of the shop.

Will had made his way slowly and quietly to the back of the shop, pulling the curtain just enough to slip through. Leaning against the archway of the entrance to the back room Will took in the sight. Hannibal was deep in concentration. Will watched hands and lithe fingers making tiny, exact adjustments and marks on the paper. Hannibal's hair was also falling slightly in front of his face as he bent over his work in concentration. He looked completely focused and in his own world. Will could watch him all day.

Eventually Hannibal smelt Will's terrible aftershave and looked up, smiling. "How long have you been there?"

"Long enough. Its oddly relaxing watching you work." Will smirked.

"You aren't supposed to be coming here to the shop." Hannibal leant back in his chair and fixed Will with as much of a glare as he could, his lips twitched in a smile though despite himself.

"I didn't think you were serious about that." Will pretended to look hurt.

"I was trying to be nice about it." A raised eyebrow.

"I see. Well I apologise. Won't happen again." Will was doing his best coy impression and it was delicious.

Hannibal looked Will up and down he was dressed smartly, Hannibal was not sure he had ever seen Will looking this smart before. "You look nice."

"No need to sound so surprised."

Hannibal laughed and stood up and went over to Will, "not surprised I have always thought you very beautiful." He kissed him gently on the lips. "Seriously what are you doing here? How do you manage to sneak in when I am so sure I locked the door."

"Ahh" Will said looking away, "slight confession."

Hannibal arched an eyebrow, "I had locked the door hadn't I? The other times too?"

Will smiled, "I may have picked the lock."

"Why?" Hannibal laughed and Will would still not look him in the eye.

“Okay well the first time I was intrigued, I had heard about you from both Alana and Jack. When I tried the door and it was locked I thought I’d just go and have a look around. As soon as I heard the music I realised you were in. I may have snooped around a bit before announcing myself. The second time I just enjoyed seeing your face so much after the first time that I couldn’t resist.” Hannibal looked at Will incredulously. “I am sorry I didn’t know the full extent of the attack honestly, now that I think about it I realise it was rude.”

“What about this time?”

“You didn’t answer your phone I could hear the music so I just... well sorry.”

“Do you carry around lock picking equipment?”

Will met Hannibal’s eyes finally and nodded, he took a small leather wallet from his pocket and handed it over to Hannibal who opened it. Sure enough there were several different picks in there.

“It was my Dad’s.” Hannibal looked at Will, knowing he should be angry but he couldn’t quite bring himself to be, he really had no control when it came to this man. “Are you mad?”

“I should be.” Hannibal laughed and handed the wallet back to Will who put it back in his pocket. “You call me ridiculous. I should just give you a key.”

“Might be better.” Will smiled and Hannibal adored that smile so much he knew he would forgive this man anything.

“So what are you doing here? Other than breaking and entering. Would you like some tea?”

Will laughed again, “I am here because I was at court and had some time to kill before my next class and thought I would come and see you.”

“That’s why you look smart.”

“Yes. Tea would be lovely if you don’t mind me staying?” Will said this in a most faux coy way while batting his eyelashes that Hannibal rolled his eyes.

“Sit down and don’t touch anything.”

Will did as he was told moving the spare chair to the other side of Hannibal’s desk. He looked over at the drawing, smiling. He then watched as Hannibal busied himself making them tea, he had a small tea making station in the corner of his office. He even had a tea chest which Will smiled at when he saw shaking his head, *ridiculous*, he thought.

Hannibal handed Will his mug and then sat in his chair, “Which case was it?” Hannibal asked.

Will took a deep breath and then said “Gareth Jacob Hobbs.”

Hannibal stopped and looked at Will, now he was angry, “you didn’t think to tell me? I would have come with you.”

“It was a closed court.”

“I could have waited outside. You are planning on teaching a class this afternoon?”

“This is why I didn’t tell you. Its fine I am fine. I made an appointment to see Bedelia, for my sins, later just in case I did have a freak out which I didn’t.”

“Will you have just recovered from a serious illness, probably brought on in part by stress, you didn’t think it was worth mentioning that you were in court today for the case of the man you killed. How long have you known about the date?” Hannibal’s tone was low, he was frustrated why did Will still not trust him after all this time?

“A week.” Will managed to keep eye contact but only just.

“A week.” Hannibal repeated under his breath, he broke eye contact and stared at his tea.

“Yes.”

Hannibal looked up again, “Will you should have told me.”

Will sighed, Hannibal looked hurt and Will hadn’t fully anticipated that, he had not anticipated how bad it made him feel. “I’m sorry I guess I’m not used to this.”

“Used to what?”

“You, us, your need to care for me all the time.” It was true Will had never expected the affection Hannibal had given him, how he had stayed with him through his illness, how much better he felt just being around him.

“You have been married Will.” Hannibal was still not convinced, he felt hurt he thought after staying by Will when he was ill he had proved something, he had earned something.

“I know but this feels different. I guess after being ill and putting you through all of that I didn’t want to bother you.”

“It’s not bothering me Will, it’s called being in a relationship.” Hannibal placed his mug on the desk and then rubbed his face with his hands in frustration. “We are partners, we support each other if you let me.”

Will conceded. “You’re right. I’m sorry.”

“I usually am.”

“What?”

“Right.”

Will laughed and drank his tea, “well maybe we will have to agree to disagree on that. Seriously though I am sorry about not telling you about the court date and the breaking and entering thing.”

“You will just have to make it up to me.”

“How will I be doing that?”

“For starters you can come to my house after your appointment with Bedelia and allow me to cook you dinner.”

“Actually I was going to suggest that. Alana and Margot said they would see to the dogs, Margot misses them.”

Hannibal smiled, “good. Why are you seeing Bedelia again? I thought you didn’t like her?”

“I don’t, I mean she is an acquired taste I guess. Jack and Alana thought I should see someone after today so I figured better the devil you know.”

“Alana knew, about today? Of course she did.”

“Don’t be mad at her, I may have told her I told you and asked you not to come.”

“Will.” Hannibal sighed again in frustration.

“I know again I’m sorry.”

Hannibal stood and walked around to Will. He knelt down in front of Will taking Will’s hands in his own, “when are you going to trust this?”

Will looked away for a moment, tears threatening to spill in his eyes. “Will look at me.” Will moved his head and met Hannibal’s eyes. “You need to trust me, you need to let me care for you the way I want to. You are not an imposition to me, I want to be a part of your life. I love you.”

Will smiled and nodded, “I know I’m sorry, I’ll work on it. I love you too.”

Will had left Hannibal’s shop to teach his class despite Hannibal’s protests. Will wanted to be distracted he knew he was better when he was busy and his students had already had enough disruption with him being ill. So he taught his class and thought about nothing more than his lecture. He then made his way to his appointment with Bedelia, a feeling of dread having started to creep up on him. He suddenly regretted making this appointment in the first place he should have seen someone else.

His hand hovered over the doorbell and then he sighed and thought *just get it over with* and pressed the button. He could hear the echo of the doorbell inside and then the clicking of heels. Bedelia answered the door, “come in Will.” Her tone was friendly which immediately put Will on edge for some reason he couldn’t quite figure out, she had a natural ability to put

people off kilter. Will just smiled and walked in. Bedelia closed the door and gestured for him to take a seat in the lounge.

“Would you like some wine?”

“Is that entirely appropriate?”

“We are just having conversations Will, I thought it might make you more comfortable.”

Will smiled, “okay why not.”

He sat down and waited for Bedelia to re-appear which she did with two glasses of red wine. She handed one to Will and then she took a seat.

“How are you feeling?”

Will sipped his wine and smiled, “better thank you.”

“Glad to hear it. So you had the court case today.”

“Yes.”

“How did that go?”

“Fine, as expected really. I just made my statement answered some questions. All very straightforward.”

“You are feeling alright? No hallucinations or feelings of guilt reappearing?”

“No, I went to see Hannibal afterwards and I taught a class this afternoon so I was distracted. I honestly feel better than I thought I would.”

“Hannibal didn’t go with you.”

“No.”

“That seems strange, did you ask him not to?” Will sipped his wine to give himself a chance to decide how honest he wanted to be. “We might be just having conversations but that does not mean I will not be discreet. Anything you tell me stays between us and I certainly will not mention anything to Hannibal.”

Will looked at her for a moment to decide if she was telling the truth, he decided she was. “I didn’t tell him about today.”

“Why?” She said this, Will observed, in a remarkably even not too smug tone of voice.

“I didn’t want to worry him. He never left my bedside the whole time I was ill, he has just gone back to work and our lives are getting back to normal. I didn’t want to throw a spanner in the works when there was no need.”

Bedelia looked at him, face smooth and he sighed knowing what was coming. “That’s not the reason, or at least not the only reason. You knew he would want to come, you knew he would want to know. He wants to care for you and you don’t know how to let him.”

Well that was blunt, not as blunt as he was expecting but still. “Yes.”

“You have so many walls up Will that it’s going to take time for them to come down. To his credit Hannibal has made some cracks in them. You are both similar in this respect he has walls too. He wants to break yours though and I think he wants you to break his. It’s unlike him to let someone in as he has done with you. I think you sense that and it makes you pull back from him.”

Will thought about that for a moment, “maybe. I think also I am not used to being with someone who wants to look after me the way he does. We moved quickly as well.”

“Yes you did but when there is a connection sometimes it is unavoidable. You just need to give it time, allow yourself to let him in. I think that perhaps it will do you both good.”

“I think you could be right.” Will could see the darkness at the edge of the room and tried to ignore it, sipping his wine.

“What is it you see?”

“What do you mean?”

“I have noticed that sometimes your eyes glaze over at the edges as if you are seeing something.”

Will smiled she was too observant, “I sometimes see this darkness encroaching on me from the edges. More so after Gareth Jacob Hobbs.”

“How does it make you feel?”

Will thought about it for a moment he hadn’t really given it much thought not wanting to, he just pushed it away. “I don’t know.”

“Place your glass down and close your eyes.” Will did as she asked, he leant back in the chair and closed his eyes. “Allow yourself to think about that darkness now, you are safe here, this is a safe place. Imagine it slowly, imagine it as if you are looking at it from the outside no connection to it. Think about its shape, its purpose.”

Will imagined smoke, a dark thick inky smoke, blacker than his eyelids, it appeared at the edges of his mind’s eye, slowly creeping its way from all directions. He could see it now so clearly, he could smell its thick oily scent, it was like it was filling him up, through his nose and eyes and mouth.

“Breathe Will, you are safe remember. Allow yourself to just feel it. Think about it gently, how does it make you feel?”

Will took in a deep breath and then let it out, he could feel the cloying darkness around him still but examined the feeling in the pit of his stomach as he studied it. He took in a sudden breath as if surprised by what he felt, “it makes me feel alive, it’s beautiful.”

He opened his eyes suddenly, his breathing erratic. “It’s alright Will, take a deep breath and hold it and then slowly release it.”

Will did as she asked a few times and until he was more relaxed. He drank his wine and felt better.

Once she knew he was calmer Bedelia spoke again, “you were surprised? You didn’t expect that feeling?”

“I thought it would be fear, I thought I would feel fear.”

“You have a gift of empathy, you are able to assume anyone’s point of view. It’s how you found Gareth Jacob Hobbs in the first place, you thought like him, you assumed his point of view.”

“Yes.”

“To be able to empathise with killers, as you do, in fact to empathise with anyone you need to be able to understand them. Part of you understands Gareth Jacob Hobbs completely, this part of you is at war with the part that doesn’t want to understand him. You worry about losing who you are, about giving into a more primal part of you. Part of that worry is because of the allure of it, of finally just relinquishing control and giving in.”

“You think part me wants it, likes it?”

“I think that you have conflicting feelings brought up by your empathy that you find hard to reconcile and that seeps into your relationships. You find it hard to trust people and make connections because you are not entirely sure what they might be connecting with. I can tell you that when it comes to Hannibal you should not worry, he has his own darkness that he fights. It would perhaps be good for both of you to fight it or indeed embrace it together rather than alone.”

Will took these words in, they made a strange sense to him. The connection he had with Hannibal had always seemed dark at the edges, he could see that Hannibal was not innocent that a part of him had enjoyed killing his attacker that night. Just as a part of Will had enjoyed pulling the trigger on Gareth Jacob Hobbs. What Will was unsure of was whether this similarity, this shared experience and emotional response was a good thing or whether it would mean they would just drag each other further down. He also wondered at which of these outcomes he wanted more.

Margot was in her bedroom at the Verger mansion, she hated this house but knew she could never leave it. It was all tied up in the business and selling it would be impossible her father had seen to that in his will, it was not to be sold it was to be kept in the family. *These walls held too many secrets, too many ghosts anyway*, Margot thought. It had taken some persuasion for the Alana to agree to move in, she wanted to live with Margot but not in this mausoleum as she had called it. Margot had decided that through Alana and their child they could make this place something else. They could exorcise some of the demons replace them with happier times and that perhaps was better than just leaving.

Her thoughts had been wondering to her family a lot these days as a new life grew inside her. It was only natural she supposed, she was beginning to gain an emotional detachment which she had not previously been able to achieve. This again she supposed was a good thing. Even towards her brother who was never kind, even when he appeared so he was being cruel. He didn't know any other way. Learned behaviour from their father. She was starting to think of their childhood as a lesson now, as the negative to what she wanted for her son. She would break the cycle, she and Alana together would break the cycle together.

Now she just needed to decide what she was going to do with the knife. She had kept it all these years, even when she had stopped harming herself, as a kind of reminder or if she was being honest as back up just in case she ever needed it. She had chosen it as her weapon against Mason because it contained traces of herself, she had used it to slice open her flesh because of him. Now she looked at it and wondered at it. The only feeling she felt towards it now was of an ending, a resolution. It didn't seem to have that hold over her it once did. She had used it to carve her freedom, truly this time not just a fleeting moment of relief that was actually just another lock on the cage of her mind. Another way of control. She didn't need it anymore. If she was going to share her life with someone else not just Alana but their child she needed to let go of this.

So she wrapped it in tissue, carefully as the blade was still sharp. She walked to the stables and took her favourite black mare out and rode out to the very edge of the estate. She stopped by an old oak tree one she and Mason use to play by as kids, the one where Mason had broken her arm by pushing her from one of the branches. He had laughed and laughed and left her on the ground for hours screaming before someone from the house realised they had been missing. Their initials were carved into the tree. She buried the knife nearest the roots as she could and vowed to never come to this tree again, he could have this part of the estate. If he had to go somewhere, as all demons inevitably do, he could go here. She would cordon this tree off, no one would be allowed near it. Her demons could lie here and fight with Mason's for as long as they wanted.

She got on her horse and rode back to the house. Alana had come home with a car full of Will's dogs, and immediately began shouting at her for riding while pregnant.

Will decided he would ring the doorbell in concession for his breaking and entering activities.

“Even when you have a key you won’t use it now? I suppose I should be glad you used the doorbell.” Hannibal was only slightly joking.

“Wasn’t sure if my key privileges has been revoked.” Will removed his work satchel carefully and placed it leaning against the wall on the bench underneath the coat rack, he then removed his coat and hung it up.

Hannibal was watching him as he did this, “perhaps they should be. I should make you earn them back caro.”

Will smiled at the pet name, Hannibal hadn’t called him that when they parted earlier and it had stung a small amount that he might still be upset. He turned to face Hannibal and kissed him on the cheek, “anything you want Tesoro, anything.”

Hannibal smiled back, “for now you can come in and help me prepare dinner.”

“Tesoro, please do not put me in charge of anything important.”

Hannibal laughed as he made his way to the kitchen followed by Will, “I would not be so foolish.”

Hannibal then set Will up with wine and his chopping station where he was in charge of vegetables. “This I can do.” Will said with glee and started to chop while drinking sips of wine and sneaking glances at Hannibal’s forearms.

“How was Bedelia?” Hannibal asked.

“As insightful as ever, she is slightly scary.”

“Oh?”

“Yes I think I need to mull over some of it before I talk about it. She approves of us though, thinks we are well matched.”

“Well I suppose that’s something.”

“She also agrees that I should have told you about the court date.”

“Well yes.”

Will smiled, “I was going to wait until after dinner but I can see my chopping abilities are not enough to get back into your good graces. I brought back up.” Will left his station and went back out to the hallway to retrieve the gift he had bought Hannibal.

He placed it on the counter, “sorry I didn’t have time to wrap it.”

Hannibal looked down at the antique mahogany box and then back up at the satisfied grin on Will’s face as if gift giving has been a competition he had been losing until now.

“You didn’t have to get me anything.”

“I know. I didn’t plan it as when I thought about buying you anything before it gave me a headache, what do you buy the man who has everything? Then I saw this, thought about keeping it until Christmas but then decided I might be pushing my luck that you’d still be around by then after my current behaviour and thought I’d cash in the brownie points now.”

Hannibal fixed him with a glare but Will’s smile only got broader.

“Sarai la mia morte, caro.”

“Save that till later I do want to eat at some point. Go on open it.”

Hannibal smiled and wiped his hands, needlessly, on the dishcloth he always kept on his apron while cooking. He approached the box with careful fingers and undid the catch and opened it. The box opened out flat, blue velvet lined, it contained beautifully restored antique drawing equipment including compasses, dividers and old metal nib pens. It was stunning. “Will.”

“I know I couldn’t believe my luck when I found it.”

“You didn’t just find this.”

“Okay I may have spent quite a lot of time looking for it but I did find it and it arrived yesterday.”

“It’s beautiful, truly, you shouldn’t have.”

“I know what on earth am I going to get you for Christmas?!”

Hannibal laughed and looked down at the set again, running his hands over the instruments. Hannibal then walked around the counter to Will, “thank you caro it really is very beautiful.” Hannibal kissed him and Will deepened it hoping to distract Hannibal even more from being angry with him.

Hannibal broke the kiss and put his hand through Will’s hair who moaned at the contact, “Sei così bello, amore mio e sono così grato che ci siamo trovati. Penso non ci separeremo mai. Ci troveremo in ogni Presto ti dirò tutti i miei segreti e ora penso di poter esser certo che tu li prenderai e troverai loro un posto, con me.” Will closed his eyes as Hannibal spoke and let the words wash over him as the darkness spread like smoke behind his eyes once again. “Saremo insieme per sempre, caro, viaggeremo per questa vita come se fossimo una sola, te lo prometto.”

Will smiled and opened his eyes, “Tesoro you know what your Italian does to me. Stop it before dinner is ruined.”

Hannibal kissed Will once more and smiled. “Let me put this in my study so I know it’s safe and then I will be back.

Once they had managed to cook dinner, there were lots of momentary lapses from cooking where hands had wandered and kisses had deepened but eventually they had eaten. Hannibal was carrying the plates back into the kitchen, Will had taken the wine upstairs and was

drawing a bath for them. By the time Hannibal made his way upstairs Will had undressed and was waiting, wearing one of Hannibal's silk dressing gowns, leaning against the door frame of the bathroom with as much seduction as possible. This caused Hannibal to smirk.

"Get undressed Tesoro, your bath awaits."

"I tuoi desideri sono ordini."

Will hummed his approval and then preceded to watch as Hannibal got undressed. Once divested of his clothes under Will's watchful gaze he made his way over to Will and undid the silk robe, pushed it off his shoulders and watched as the silk fluttered to the ground. Hannibal then took Will's face in his hands and kissed him passionately, Will's hands made their way to Hannibal's back.

Will manoeuvred them into bathroom and Hannibal got in the tub first then Will who leaned against him. The water was soothing and the smell of the bath oils relaxing and Hannibal felt himself relax for the first time in weeks with Will in his arms. They led in silence, Hannibal's fingers coursing through Will's hair and Will's fingers making lazy circles on Hannibal's legs.

Hannibal's hands found their way to Will's thighs where they gently rested. "Caro."

"Mmmmm, yes."

"I feel there is something I need to tell you in the spirit of confession."

Will moaned slightly and tilted his head to look up at Hannibal, opening his eyes he spoke, "If it's that you are a Count, Alana already told me."

Hannibal smiled and kissed the top of Will's head. "No, although I am technically. Seriously there are things you do not know about me that its time you did."

"I know we haven't really talked about our past, maybe we should have. I guess we just skipped over all that somehow."

"Indeed we did and I am thinking that maybe we should talk about it. Is there anything you want to ask me?"

"I mean the whole Count thing is brilliant I need to hear about that someday."

Hannibal laughed softly, "caro, seriously is there anything you want to know?"

"Not unless you want to tell me. What about you? Is there anything to want to know about me?"

"I am sure you have some tales of your lock picking skills that I would like to learn about another day. But no, not unless you want to tell me."

“There you go.”

They stayed in silence again until the water had cooled and they got out of the bath made their way to the bed, Will led spooned on Hannibal’s side hands running through his chest hair while placing kisses on his shoulder.

Will could feel the tension of unspoken words from Hannibal, “if you want to tell me something then do Tesoro.”

Hannibal breathed in a deep breath and let it out slowly. “My attacker, he was not the first man I killed.” Will stayed silent, listening, he was not surprised he had seen it in Hannibal’s eyes when they met. “When I was a young boy my sister was murdered in front of me. My parents had been killed earlier. They kept Mischa and I for days, torturing us, eventually they killed her. I managed to escape but before I did I killed the man who murdered her.”

“How old were you?”

“Thirteen.”

“How old was your sister?”

“Six.”

Will winced as Hannibal said it, “I can’t imagine...”

“You could.” Hannibal whispered.

“I won’t though.”

“It was murder, I tore him apart.”

“I know.”

There was silence then between them, Will changed his position so he was on his side, head supported by his hand, he leaned down and kissed Hannibal slowly. Shifting again so his body covered Hannibal’s, Will continued kissing Hannibal while gently moving his body so that he was grinding up against Hannibal’s cock. Will reached to the bedside table and taking the bottle of lube squeezed some into his hand and then took both his own and Hannibal’s cock in his hand and began to move up and down.

“Mmm caro.”

“You can tell me all your secrets Tesoro, I feel as if I know them already, I found them in the dark, and they comforted me and brought me back to you.” Will buried his lips into Hannibal’s neck and continued to move his hand.

“Caro, I want to, I want to tell you everything.”

Will bit him on the neck and sped up his pace with his hand, “Tesoro, tell me your secrets.”

“I don’t want to....ahhh lose you caro.”

“You will never lose me.”

“Fuck, I want to... tell you....I promised myself if you...came back...I would...I’m too....scared.”

“Tell me in Italian.” Will bit him again on his neck, sucked at the skin and licked at it until he knew there would be mark, he moved at a faster pace.

Hannibal moaned as Will sped up and increased pressure, *“caro, ho sangue sulle mie mani e non tutto può essere giustificato.”*

Will moved so he was sat between Hannibal’s legs, one hand on his cock and with the other his fingers skirted around Hannibal’s hole. Will pushed one finger in and Hannibal gasped. He slowly moved his finger in and out while stroking Hannibal’s cock. “Tell me more Tesoro.” Will’s commanding tone made Hannibal feel even more desperate and he bucked up against Will’s finger. Will then added another finger and started to spread Hannibal apart, “tell me.”

“Ne ho goduto. Ho preso delle vite e me ne sono deliziato. Oh fuck, caro I’m going to come.”

“Not yet Tesoro. Tell me more.” Will pushed a third finger inside Hannibal who cried out as Will hit his prostate, “Non arriverai finché non ti dico. Dimmi di più.”

“Fuck, Caro, amore mio, ho ucciso molte persone.”

Will removed his fingers and lined up his cock with Hannibal’s hole he poured more lube and then slowly, achingly slowly entered Hannibal who was making needy, breathy noises as Will continued to stroke Hannibal’s cock.

“Quante?”

Hannibal was so enraptured that he didn’t notice that Will had spoken in Italian. “oh god fuck oh god, troppe, mio amore, trope.”

Will pushed himself fully inside Hannibal then and began to thrust in earnest, keeping a faster pace. Hannibal was coming undone, eyes rolled back in his head, hands balled up to fists, the needy moans increasing with every thrust. He sounded desperate and it only spurred Will on. “Tu sai quante.” Will now started to sound breathless, every word a struggle. Hannibal moaned.

“Dieci, forse di più.” Will was thrusting and stroking Hannibal at the same pace, he watched Hannibal intently, watched as his back arched up, his face contorted with pleasure, words leaving his lips unbidden as Will caught them all.

“Quante? Tu lo sai. Dimmelo adesso.” Will thrust in hard and Hannibal cried out.

“Dodici, oh caro, perdonami, caro, caro, caro...” They both came at the same time Hannibal continued to repeat caro long after they had both finished, tears were streaming down his face.

“Ti perdono.”

Chapter End Notes

You will be the death of me caro. - Sarai la mia morte, caro.

You are so beautiful my love and I am so thankful we have found each other. Sei così bello, amore mio e sono così grato che ci siamo trovati.

I think that we will never be apart. Penso non ci separeremo mai.

We will find each other in every lifetime, over and over. Ci troveremo in ogni nostra (I added nostra=ours/our because in Italian saying just vita sounded a bit weird) vita, ancora e ancora.

Soon I will tell you all my secrets and I think now I can be sure you will take them and find a place for them, with me. Presto ti dirò tutti i miei segreti e ora penso di poter esser certo che tu li prenderai e troverai loro un posto, con me.

We will be together always caro, we will travel through this life as one I promise you that. -Saremo insieme per sempre, caro, viaggeremo per questa vita come se fossimo una sola persona (I couldn't find a fitting translation for as one, so I translated it as if it were something along the lines of "as if we were one person"), te lo prometto.

Your wish is my command. - I tuoi desideri sono ordini.

caro, I have killed people my love, I have blood on my hands and it's not all justified. I enjoyed it. I took lives and I enjoyed it. - Caro, amore mio, ho ucciso molte persone, ho sangue sulle mie mani e non tutto può essere giustificato. Ne ho goduto. Ho preso delle vite e me ne sono deliziato.

You will not come until I tell you to. Tell me more. - Non arriverai finché non ti dico. Dimmi di più

how many? - Quante?

too many my love, too many. - Troppe, mio amore, troppe.

You know how many. - Tu sai quante.

Ten, maybe more. - Dieci, forse di più.

How many? You know how many. Tell me now. - Quante? Tu lo sai. Dimmelo adesso.

Twelve, oh caro forgive me, caro caro caro - Dodici, oh caro, perdonami, caro, caro, caro

I forgive you. - Ti perdono.

Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

"He heard the car pull away, he poured himself some whiskey and let the dogs out. Taking the bottle out with him he sat on the porch watching the night come over the woods, the only light from his house. No stars or moon shone in the sky; just a blanket of black. It was cold and he was shivering but he didn't care, he just let the tears freeze, then melt on his face as they poured unbidden from his eyes. Regret was growing like a weed in his stomach, he could feel the vine making its way up from his stomach to his throat cutting off his air supply, twisting around his windpipe and slowly squeezing."

Chapter Notes

So much angst i'm sorry! I hurt writing this I tell ya!

(it will have a happy ending eventually please stay with our poor murder husbands)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“ Per quanto tempo sei stato in grado di capire? ” Hannibal was breathless, Will was still on top of him, his weight pushing Hannibal down.

“Sempre. . ”

“What does this mean?”

“ Non lo so, amore mio, non lo so . ” Will kissed him deeply and Hannibal wished at that moment they could both dissolve into atoms in the darkness like stars in the night sky.

They kissed until Will couldn't breathe through his own tears anymore. He pushed Hannibal away, face contorted in pain as he did so.

Will got off the bed and went into the bathroom, he returned shortly afterwards and got dressed as Hannibal silently watched him from the bed.

“Will.” Hannibal sounded hoarse and broken, “please, please don’t, please.”

Will, fully dressed, sat down heavily on the edge of the bed and Hannibal moved behind him, arms encircling him.

“Get dressed” was all Will said.

Hannibal reluctantly removed his arms from around Will and got off the bed. Will watched as Hannibal silently dressed, eventually sitting down next to Will.

“Dimmi, dimmi tutto.”

Hannibal told him everything, he had told him every violent strike. Will closed his eyes and saw it all, he felt every murder as if he had committed every one. He saw his own hands, he felt his own pleasure at release, he felt the darkness under his fingertips and it soothed him. He wanted to fall further down and down until he and Hannibal were one together in a forest of dark, thick tar.

“When I was ill? When you were away, that was the last time? That’s why it took Alana so long to reach you?”

“Yes.”

Will opened his eyes and looked at him, eyes grey and shimmering with tears. “You need to leave.”

“Will-“

“I assume you have aliases and some kind of plan.”

Hannibal nodded. “For you too. Come with me?”

Will saw the hope fall from Hannibal’s eyes in tears that seemed to burn red marks down his face. He watched as his own fingers reach out and touched them as they fell, he licked the salt from his fingertips and moaned.

Hannibal watched him, uncertainty making it hard for him to breath.

“I want to,” Will spoke as if from a great distance like he had retreated inside of himself, “but I won’t.”

“Caro, please, I can’t be without you. I love you.” Hannibal’s voice sounded raw and unhinged his accent viscous with regret.

“Tesoro. I won’t. I can’t.”

“Potremmo essere così belli insieme.” Hannibal kissed Will then, tears like acid on their tongues.

Will broke the kiss “ Non posso, tesoro, non posso e basta. Avrai questa notte .” Will stood up looking down at Hannibal who couldn’t seem to move. “Goodbye my love.” Will walked out of Hannibal’s home into the rain, feeling as if his heart would burst with the agony, each step felt as if it left a blood drenched footprint which was then washed away behind him, red liquid smoke mixing with the rain.

The moment Will walked into Jack’s office, Jack knew. It was etched all over Will’s face but he looked determined which scared Jack.

“He’s gone.” Will said and Jack sighed.

“You let him leave?”

“Yes. I wanted to go with him but I didn’t.” Will realised that this probably didn’t make Jack feel any better.

“Will. How long of a head start did you give him?”

“He confessed last night.”

“What exactly did he confess to?”

Will looked like he was going to be sick as he handed over the papers he was holding, “I’m going home.”

“No, not yet.” Jack’s tone made it clear he was not to be argued with. “I don’t suppose there is any point asking you where he might have gone?”

Will shook his head, “I didn’t ask.”

“Would you tell me if you did?”

“I’m not sure, that’s why I didn’t ask.”

“Sit.”

Will did as he was ordered and sank down into one of the deep arm chairs in Jack’s office and listened as Jack put out an APB on Hannibal and started the ball rolling on finding him.

Alana drove him home there was silence between them, it was sticky and thick and made Will want to claw his way through it but he just couldn’t find the energy to produce the words

needed. Will couldn't see Alana's tears as they fell silently down her face because he had his head against the window but he could feel them, the rain on the window giving him an idea of what they looked like.

Will was slowly cracking, his skin was too tight and stretched across his body and he longed to be able to leave it. Will remembered the crack in Hannibal's voice when he asked Will to come with him, it felt like it opened a gulf between them that neither could cross again. It felt like a howling void that would swallow them both. Will closed his eyes against the noise of it in his mind. He just wanted Alana's salt water tears to dissolve him so he could merge with the world and lose himself forever. It was as if he had been cleaved from a part of himself, blood pouring out around him threatening to drown him. He realised he was crying too as Hannibal's words *come with me* echoed around his head, burning the edges of his skull, scarring him permanently.

Will had wanted to go with Hannibal, he had wanted to run after him, he had wanted to deep in his bones. He had felt the thread between them stretch, snap and whip across his face like a slap. He had wished then that Hannibal had just gutted him and left him to bleed out his darkness on the floor. Will just wished it all away but at the same time held on with all of his might, unable to unclench his soul from Hannibal's. How would he breathe the next breath, how would he beat the next heartbeat? It seemed impossible.

Alana pulled up at Will's house they still hadn't spoken a word, she looked at him with pleading eyes and it winded him. He wanted to claw at them, pluck them out so he didn't have to look at the pity and horror reflected back at him. It was searing and Will felt burnt. He got out of the car and didn't look back, even when he heard her cries, he just walked up the steps and went into his house.

He heard the car pull away, he poured himself some whiskey and let the dogs out. Taking the bottle out with him he sat on the porch watching the night come over the woods, the only light from his house. No stars or moon shone in the sky; just a blanket of black. It was cold and he was shivering but he didn't care, he just let the tears freeze, then melt on his face as they poured unbidden from his eyes. Regret was growing like a weed in his stomach, he could feel the vine making its way up from his stomach to his throat cutting off his air supply, twisting around his windpipe and slowly squeezing.

Eventually he stumbled inside having drunk most of the bottle. He looked at the stairs and began to cry hot, heavy, gulping tears at the thought of their shared bed. The bed that looked like it didn't belong except when he would wake up with Hannibal next to him, then it had felt like a cocoon, a safe haven for just them. He screamed and it echoed back to him empty and hollowed out with his grief. The dogs looked at him as if the person who was stood there was no longer their master. Will dropped the bottle of whiskey on the floor and fell down on his old bed, tears forcing his body to exhaustion and a fitful sleep.

Margot embraced Alana, her body wracked with fits of tears. She stroked Alana's hair and spoke soothing words while crying her own tears, their baby kicked gently in Margot's stomach. Margot got Alana inside, undressed her and put her to bed curling up next to her singing softly in her ear as Alana continued to cry even in sleep.

Margot thought of all the pain she had felt in her life, all the pain that had been inflicted upon her, all the pain she had to survive. She could feel it in her veins, making its well-worn path through her arteries. She realised she had never felt pain for someone else before. It was a strange feeling and it made her feel like there was a maternal wellspring forming inside her after all. Feeling for someone else felt healing somehow as if the pain so ingrained in her blood was finding new grooves to flow through now. She hurt but it had a purpose, it wasn't just survival for herself now it was for her family. For this woman sobbing herself to sleep at the loss of a friend and the hurt of another. Margot found she smiled through her tears and hoped Alana would not see and misunderstand it.

Alana woke early in the morning, dawn light lingering through the clouds. She woke to Margot's eyes looking lovingly down at her and she couldn't help but smile.

"Hey." Margot said softly.

"Did you sleep?" Alana shifted closer to Margot her hand stroked Margot's belly lovingly.

"A bit I mostly watched you."

"You should try to sleep now. I need to phone Jack anyway."

"You should rest too, I don't call collapsing into fitful sobbing unconsciousness, sleep."

Alana smiled and kissed Margot, "it's okay love, sleep."

"How is Will?" Margot asked cautiously, her voice a whisper.

Alana looked physically hurt at the mention of Will's name, "I don't know, he wouldn't talk to me, he wouldn't look at me."

"I'll go and check on him later."

"Okay, sleep now though my love." Alana kissed her again and got out of the bed to phone Jack.

She made the mistake of turning on the television as she made herself coffee, Hannibal's face was all over the screen. The word manhunt was everywhere. She started crying all over again. Eventually she got hold of herself and rang Jack.

"Any news?"

"No, we have him on a no-fly list and have been checking everything else but he has access to a lot of cash and probably had a plan in case of this eventuality so it's likely he's long

gone. We just have to hope someone recognises him and calls it in.

“There must be something else we can do.”

“Alana I have been up all night trust me when I say I’m doing all I can.” Jack sounded exhausted.

“I know, I’m sorry.” There was silence as she realised she needed to apologise for more than just that, “I am you know Jack, sorry, I should have listened to you.”

“It’s too late now for apologies Alana, we just need to catch him. Have you spoken to Will? He won’t tell me anything.”

“No he wouldn’t even look at me last night. I can try and talk to him, but I doubt he will tell me anything.”

“He says he doesn’t know where Hannibal would be and if he did he wouldn’t tell us. We went to the shop and searched it but there was nothing there. The safe had been emptied, his house the same. He is like a ghost. He could be anywhere.”

Alana sighed and looked at the tv as Hannibal’s face flashed across it again. “Jack, how is Will going to survive this?”

“Right now Alana I can honestly say he is the least of my worries.” With that Jack hung up the phone.

Margot appeared at Will’s door looking like an angel, she had a glow about her and an honesty to her face that caused Will to crumble to his knees the moment he saw her. She bent down with some difficulty to join him, cradling his head in her arms. She let him cry, she could smell the whiskey wafting from him like smoke. She kissed the top of his head.

“Stand up Will, just stand up.” She said this softly and insistently, knowing the pain of living moment to moment, he would have to be dealt with in stages. They stood up together, she led him inside the dogs milling around them both. “Sit down.” She instructed and he complied as his eyes tried to cry more tears but he was wrung dry.

Margot made tea, throwing out the tea she still craved that Hannibal had left. She made it strong and brought it to Will in a mug. She took a seat opposite him.

“I’m not going to ask you how you feel, because I don’t think you even know right now. I am just going to sit here and drink tea with you and you can talk to me when you need to.”

Will closed his eyes briefly, opened them and nodded, he mouthed a thank you and sipped his tea. They sat in silence watching the light chase across the floor. Margot watched Will

seeing familiar cracks in the surface of his skin that went bone deep.

“I wanted to go with him.” Will broke the spell of silence.

Margot let the words settle like dust motes in a ray of sunlight. “I know.”

“I just... I wanted to.”

“I know.”

“It feels like part of me, maybe all of me, did go and what’s left is just a raw nerve.”

“I know.”

“How do I carry on?”

“You have already, it doesn’t feel like it but you have. You are still breathing Will, I know it doesn’t feel like it but the air is going in and out of your lungs is a choice. You have chosen to survive. In this moment you have chosen to live, perhaps the next moment you won’t, but this moment you have. That’s how you will be for a long time, moment to moment, it will hurt but it will numb. The moments will get tied together somehow, you will find yourself stitched back together not in the same shape you once were but there you will be regardless.”

Will laughed a hollow, raw and torn laugh, “how long will this take?”

“Forever.”

“That’s a long time.”

“I know.”

“I knew what he was Margot and I loved him anyway, I still do.”

“Part of you will always love him. Love like that doesn’t just disappear, it doesn’t just leave you because he has gone.”

“I feel like I have lost a limb. Or an organ.”

“You have.” Will’s smile was strained and did not meet his eyes, Margot reached across and touched Will’s hand with her own “but it’s one you can live without.”

“I am nowhere near as strong as you Margot.”

“That’s not true. We are survivors Will Graham, survivors of a broken heart, not an easy thing.”

“You fought back.”

“So did you, you didn’t go with him.”

“I honestly don’t know if that was brave or cowardice.”

“Sometimes they feel like the same thing.”

“You are going to be an amazing mother Margot.”

Tears sprung to her eyes at that and she squeezed his hand, “thank you.”

Alana made it into work and went straight to see Jack who was briefing the task force who still hadn't found anything. Jack knew they wouldn't, if Hannibal wanted to disappear he would. Alana followed Jack into his office when he was done.

“Did you speak to Will?” Jack asked as he closed the door, he moved around to his desk and sat heavily in his chair he rubbed his face with his hand and sighed.

“I brought coffee.” Alana said gently and handing him the take out cup.

“Thank you.” Jack took it gratefully.

“No, I haven't he needs time Jack, he's broken.”

“I can't give him time.”

“You asked him and he said he didn't know where Hannibal is.”

“He said he hadn't asked that's not the same as not knowing, he must have some idea of where he has gone.”

“He can't allow himself to think about it Jack he needs to let go.”

Jack slammed his hand down on the table in frustration, “WE ARE TALKING ABOUT MURDER! Alana, am I the only one here that still realises we work at the FBI and that murdering people is fundamentally wrong?!”

Alana startled at that, “Jack.”

He looked up at her face and immediately felt bad, “I'm sorry Alana, I'm tired and this situation is severely testing me. I am being asked a lot of uncomfortable questions about Will and his relationship with Hannibal, whether he knew what he was and I honestly don't want to know the answer Alana, because there is no way Will Graham didn't know he was sleeping with a serial killer and I don't know what to do with that information.”

Alana sighed and sat down on the chair on the other side of Jack's desk, “he may have known but he didn't let himself believe it there is a difference.”

“Is there?”

“Yes Jack you can't think that Will knowingly hid a killer?”

Jack looked at Alana “you of all people are asking this.”

Alana looked at him and narrowed her eyes, “this is not about me or Margot you have no evidence on Margot and you know it.”

“You said the same about Hannibal.”

“I admit I was wrong about him, I feel just as betrayed he was my friend too and Will is my friend, seeing him like this kills me. It makes me physically shake okay? I can’t start to think about it because the moment I do I just fall apart again. Whatever you think Margot did it’s still infinitely different to what Hannibal has done, surely you would admit that at least?”

“Did you come in here hoping that now that I know what Hannibal is I would let it drop with Margot? Is that what this is?”

“Why would the two be related?” A dawning realisation crept over Alana that made her spine feel like ice, “you were using us as bait for Hannibal to see what he’d do? What about Will? Did you send him to Hannibal?”

“As I recall you sent him to Hannibal because of his father’s watch.”

“You were always very interested in their relationship though. Is that what this was about from the start?” Jack’s silence spoke volumes. “Will knew, when he first went there he knew what you suspected?”

“Yes.”

“Jack...what kind of dangerous game were you playing?”

“I didn’t ask Will to get into bed with him! I asked him to check on him, he told me the same as you. The next thing I knew they were sleeping together and so yes I questioned Will’s objectivity in this case. I still do. He knew Alana, there is no way he didn’t.”

“Then why didn’t he go with him?”

“I don’t know his conscious kicked in I guess. Better late than never, he still let him get away though gave him a whole evening head start.”

“He did?”

“Yes Alana, Will is not innocent in this and I don’t know what consequences are in store for him yet.”

Alana had tears in her eyes she was so angry, Will had lied, he had lied from the beginning, he was still lying. “What about Margot?”

Jack sighed “as you say I have nothing on her and no reason or time to look any further. You can rest easy, it’s probably the least I can do.”

“Yeah I would say so Jack.” Alana stood up, wiped the tears from her eyes and walked out of Jack’s office leaving the door open as she left.

6 months later....

The pain was searing but life affirming, it made a strange kind of sense to Margot, she thought at the back of her brain while screaming, that bringing life into this world should be filled with so much pain and blood. Alana was holding on to one of her hands and Will was holding on to the other, the three of them felt linked through the waves of agony flowing through Margot pushing this life from inside to the outside, into existence, bloodied and screaming.

When the baby was born and placed on Margot’s breast she cried and kissed his head, she whispered ‘I love you’ wanting those to be the first words he ever heard. Alana cried and kissed her and told her she had never looked more beautiful. Margot caught Will’s eye and saw a flicker of hope in them that made her heart swell to look at him. He kissed her forehead and told her ‘well done.’ She laughed and they all cried.

Margot was sleeping, Alana had gone to fill out paperwork, Will held the tiny baby fascinated with its steady breathing, tiny lips gurgling. He felt a strange feeling of peace that was at once alien and expected. Alana appeared with coffee and sat down next to Will.

“Thank you for being here with us.” Alana spoke with genuine affection, it had taken some time but Margot refused to lose Will as a friend and had named him godfather before the baby was born.

“Of course, thank you for letting me. It was amazing, she was amazing.”

Alana looked at Margot sleeping peacefully, “yeah she was, she is.” Alana looked at Will then holding her son and thought that perhaps he could find peace after all and it made her smile.

“You look at peace.”

“I feel the most at peace I’ve felt in a while. I guess this little one is calming, I am sure it won’t last.”

Alana laughed softly “no I don’t expect it will.”

“I am sorry Will, I don’t know if I ever said it.”

“You have nothing to be sorry about Alana.”

“I should have known, I should have seen it.”

“He blinded you Alana, he worked hard to blind you. I knew what he was, I loved him anyway, and I didn’t tell you, that’s on me.” Will looked down at the face of the sleeping baby and smiled, “love is blind Alana, willingly or otherwise, we blind ourselves or we let it ourselves be blinded. I was aware.”

“I still feel responsible.”

Will looked at her, “don’t, feel responsible for this little one, forget him and leave it behind Alana you have a family now. Be happy.”

She smiled, “you will be happy again one day I know you will.”

Will smiled but it didn’t quite reach his eyes, “I am here with you and Margot with this gift and for the moment that’s all I need.”

“I am glad you are here, I am glad he didn’t take our friendship.”

“Margot wasn’t about to let a baby sitter get away.” Will said softly.

Alana laughed “you will regret agreeing to be godfather I am sure!”

Will looked at Alana, suddenly serious, he then looked at Margot and then at the baby, “never.”

Will still dreamed of the darkness around him it would find him in the middle of the night and hold him fast and tight. He would wake up struggling for breath and crying. He still wanted to sink into let it take him underneath it break the surface and trap him underneath. He could feel that piercing arousal surround ing him causing all the air leave his lungs. His own obstinance kept pulling him back with insistence. In the depths of the night he would wish his stubbornness away but it wouldn’t leave him.

Sometimes when he closed his eyes and let the pendulum swing he could feel Hannibal, he would see him alone and focused. Hannibal would turn around and look at Will, look through him and Will would hum with need and open his eyes gasping in despair. His whole body aching for Hannibal but his own mind would bring him back, force him to breathe again and focus on something else. He threw himself into work, teaching his students, any spare time usually spent with Margot, Alana and the baby or Bev would take him out and get him so drunk he couldn’t see anyone or anything more.

No matter where he went he felt followed, stalked and haunted by a ghost of a man he shared his soul with and Will wondered if this feeling would ever leave him or if he would ever be able to live with it or without it. Margot would catch his eyes every now and again and he

would see his own pain reflected back at him which somehow made it worse. He would hold the baby warm and reassuring against his chest, something pure, something not yet ruined and be soothed for a while.

Jack had insisted he still see a therapist, still convinced that Will had lost his mind with Hannibal and would not be persuaded otherwise. Will had decided to keep seeing Bedelia, her knowledge of Hannibal a pull to him, a tether he was not yet willing to let go of.

So they sat in her stark house sipping sweet rosé wine, it was one of the few places outside of spending time with the baby that he felt calm or at least allowed himself to feel something.

“You are still grieving.” Bedelia said after Will had admitted he was still having nightmares.

“I suppose that is the word isn’t it? Grief, I am grieving his loss even though he’s not dead, at least I don’t feel he is.”

“Do you feel you would know if he was?”

“Yes. I still see him when I close my eyes sometimes as if the pull between us is still a live connection. It’s only been a few months it should get less right?”

Bedelia sipped her wine and placed her glass carefully down on the table once more, “perhaps. Would you want it to?”

Will knew the answer deep in his bones was no, he would not let this connection go for anything. The odd glimpses he would get of Hannibal were sustaining him in a way he did not want to admit, he could not admit. “I suppose not. Maybe that need will get less?”

Bedelia smiled that knowing smile of hers, “it may.”

“You know for a therapist you are not very therapeutic.” Will said slightly snarkily and drank his wine.

Bedelia laughed “that’s not what you want from me. I am a mirror for you, a portal into his mind that you have lost. You come here because you need a fix of someone who knew Hannibal almost as well as you did, who looked into the darkness and came out the other side reasonably unscathed.”

“Are you? Unscathed?”

Bedelia laughed a hollow empty laugh, “no Will I don’t think anyone can be. That’s the problem. Once you have looked past the veil it’s hard to see normal life again as anything

other than mundane. As much as fear is a powerful motivator, its absence can be all consuming.”

“I guess that’s how I feel, consumed.”

“I think he felt consumed by you as well.”

“Mutually destructive.”

“Perhaps.”

Will cocked an eyebrow, “what do you mean?”

“We will never know what could have arisen in the ashes of the destruction. You may have come back like a phoenix and been transformed together into something entirely new.”

“I am not sure I would have wanted that.” Will was as unconvinced as Bedelia.

“You still want it Will, you always will that’s the problem. What you shared was more than love, you had a connection with someone who could not feel love, who had resigned and accepted his fate as a solitary creature, unique and alone. You both had. To see your exact opposite in another is an experience that is deeper than most people’s experience of love.”

“You think of him as my opposite?”

“Your empathy makes you as unique as his lack of it. His coldness is warmed by your humanity and your warmth is tempered by his lack of humanity. You complete each other, that’s why you feel like you have lost a part of yourself. I imagine he feels the same.”

Will mused this thought over in his head, he knew Hannibal did have humanity that he could he could make you feel like you were the only thing that mattered to him in the world, that intimacy was theirs and he couldn’t begin to explain it to Bedelia.

Will just sipped his wine and then asked “Do you know where he is?” Will had wanted to ask her this for a long time but he wasn’t sure he wanted the answer.

She smiled, “no.”

“Do you know where he would go?”

“No. I never asked I didn’t want to know.”

Will nodded, “me either.”

“But you could if you wanted to, you could find him.”

Will hadn’t allowed this thought to fully bloom in his mind but he knew it was true nonetheless, he could feel Hannibal around whenever he wanted and he would have to do would be track that feeling into the darkness and he would find his exact opposite standing, waiting for him.

“I won’t.” Will whispered and felt a shiver, he drank more of his wine.

“Not now.”

“Not ever, I can’t.”

Bedelia just smiled at that and Will stared out the window wondering when he would start to feel alive again. When his life would feel more than just existing. He sighed.

“You won’t ever stop wanting him, you need to accept that. You just need to decide if you can live without him.”

Will sighed again and allowed the question to settle inside of him, could he move on? Could he find a new life with someone else? Could he exist again in a life without him? “I honestly don’t know right now, will that change?”

“It should given time.”

“You think I will one day, just leave.”

Bedelia met his gaze and smiled, “perhaps. I think you will struggle with it as long as you don’t go. Maybe you will carve out a life for yourself that will keep you happy enough that the need will just be a gentle gnawing and not all consuming. I don’t know which one it will be.”

Will laughed “I guess that makes two of us, all we can do is see what happens.”

“Indeed.”

Bev was on his porch when he arrived home with a grin and a bottle of whiskey. She hugged him as she always did for longer than necessary and too hard. Will just let her at this point having learnt to not fight it.

They settled on the couch and Bev wanted to put on music but Will found it hard to listen to anything these days.

“How are you really Will?” Bev was giving him a concerned look which just made Will feel hollowed out.

“Ha, I am fine, as fine as someone whose boyfriend was a murderous psychopath can be.”

Bev laughed and then Will laughed.

“Will you will be okay. Maybe you should just get laid?”

“No, no I am definitely not ready for that. I am not sure I ever will be.”

“Shame, I know Jimmy is up for it.”

Will laughed, “no, no work place romances.”

“I guess that rules me out as well.”

“Yeah I don’t think that would work!”

“No, no offence but definitely not. Seriously though Will have you even thought about it?”

“Thought about what?”

“Life after Hannibal. You need to find one.”

“I know Bev but right now I am just figuring out how to live with a part of myself missing, it takes time.”

“What does your therapist say?”

“That I will at some point just learn to live with it.”

“Well that’s not helpful. I think you should start dating again or just have a one night stand.”

“Bev seriously, not ready, not even remotely.”

“More whiskey it is then.” She poured him another glass and he listened to her laugh and wondered whether he would ever laugh like that again.

“It will get better though won’t it?” Will said slurring his words, the only time he felt hope was with the baby and Margot and Alana the rest of the time he was at sea.

“Yes, I promise.”

“How do you know?”

Bev looked at him with big sad eyes tears brimming on the edges, “because it has to Will, it has to.”

Will smiled and nodded.

Will was holding the baby to his chest softly singing a lullaby he vaguely remembered from his childhood. Margot and Alana were in the kitchen making lunch for them. Will paced up and down the room with him, soothing him to sleep. Will could always calm him, Margot would sometimes call him up in the middle of the night and ask him to sing down the phone to him. Will reasoned they calmed each other, he felt peace when he held Henry the only time he truly did.

Margot reappeared and sat down on the couch, “you are a wizard Will Graham, a child whisperer. Seriously can you move in? We can pay, be our nanny?”

Will laughed softly, “no thanks Margot plus I am not sure my burgeoning alcoholism would be conducive to child rearing.”

“I don’t know we could work around it he might help.”

“I already feel co-dependent on him, he soothes me as much as I sooth him! Best not make it worse. Keep calling me and don’t worry I will be back.” Will rubbed Henry’s back softly.

Margot laughed. She watched Will as he paced up and down the room as she had a thousand times, he was here most weekends now. Winston and the pack would sit obediently at Margot’s feet eyes on Henry, fascinated at this small pup who had appeared all hairless and vulnerable. Margot stroked Winston’s head as she watched Will, he looked as if he was stitching himself back together to anyone else he would have almost looked whole. To Margot he looked more broken than ever, she could see it, she had been it. She sighed and Will gave her a questioning look but Alana appeared with a tray of food for them which she placed on the large coffee table.

Walking over to Will she spoke quietly, “is he asleep?”

“Yes.”

“Seriously Will you are a baby whisperer I don’t know how you do it.” Alana carefully took him from Will, “are you sure we can’t tempt you into being our nanny?!”

“Already have a job thanks Alana.” He smiled and watched as she carried Henry off to his cot to sleep, Winston followed he would always follow and keep guard outside Henry’s door.

Will started to delve into the food and Margot laughed, “do you eat at any other time than when you are here?”

Will shrugged, “maybe I just like your cooking.”

“You staying tonight?”

“You thinking Henry might need another lullaby?”

“That’s not the only reason. We like having you and clearly you need feeding.” Margot laughed.

“Yeah I’ll stay especially if I can raid the whiskey stores.”

“It pleases me it’s being put to good use, go ahead.” Will smiled and carried on eating. “Is there any point asking you?”

“Asking me what?” Will sat down on a chair.

“How you are?”

“I’m fine Margot.”

“It’s me Will, I know you. Are you still having therapy?”

Will sighed, Margot had become even more mothering over him and he knew it wasn’t just Henry, he knew it was because she understood better than anyone what it was like to claw yourself back up from the abyss. He respected that about her. “Yes, I am. Not sure it’s helping.” He was sure it wasn’t, Bedelia was becoming an addiction a way to scratch a Hannibal itch every week.

“Maybe you should see someone else.”

“No one else knew him, knew us. Anyway I have you two and Henry as well.”

Margot smiled and she wanted to reach across and try to force all his pieces back together with sheer force of will. “You do and you always will.”

That night Henry woke up and Will went to him, stepping over Winston, he picked Henry up soothing him. He stood by the window and looked out at the moon and stars. He closed his eyes as Henry began to fall back to sleep, he let the pendulum swing and he saw Hannibal’s face as clear as day smiling at him. He opened his eyes to find tears streaming down his face, he bit his lip to stop from moaning.

“SShhh” he soothed more to himself than Henry, “shhhh...” Then Will began to sing a lullaby, his voice cracked at the edges as he imagined Hannibal could hear him somehow.

“Sleep my child and peace attend thee,
All through the night
Guardian angels God will send thee,
All through the night
Soft the drowsy hours are creeping,
Hill and dale in slumber sleeping
I my loved ones' watch am keeping,
All through the night

Angels watching, e'er around thee,
All through the night
Midnight slumber close surround thee,
All through the night
Soft the drowsy hours are creeping,
Hill and dale in slumber sleeping
I my loved ones' watch am keeping,
All through the night

While the moon her watch is keeping
All through the night
While the weary world is sleeping
All through the night

O'er thy spirit gently stealing
Visions of delight revealing
Breathes a pure and holy feeling
All through the night

Angels watching ever round thee
All through the night
In thy slumbers close surround thee
All through the night
They will of all fears disarm thee,
No forebodings should alarm thee,
They will let no peril harm thee
All through the night.

Though I roam a minstrel lonely
All through the night
My true harp shall praise sing only
All through the night
Love's young dream, alas, is over
Yet my strains of love shall hover
Near the presence of my lover
All through the night

Hark, a solemn bell is ringing
Clear through the night
Thou, my love, art heavenward winging
Home through the night
Earthly dust from off thee shaken
Soul immortal shalt thou awaken
With thy last dim journey taken
Home through the night"

Chapter End Notes

“ Per quanto tempo sei stato in grado di capire?” - “How long have you been able to understand?”

“Sempre”. - “Always.”

“Non lo so, amore mio, non lo so.” - “I don’t know my love, I don’t know.”

“Dimmi, dimmi tutto.” - “Tell me, tell me everything.”

“Potremmo essere così belli insieme.” - "We could be so beautiful together."

“Non posso, tesoro, non posso e basta. Avrai questa notte.” - “I can’t, tesoro, I just can’t.
You will have tonight.”

Translations by the wonderful @alackofanythingsay

Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

This is it everyone the final chapter of my first long term fic! Thank you all for staying with it! I hope you like the ending!

"Hannibal had sat on the edge of the bed staring at the floor, willing the pieces of his broken heart to come together again, Will to come back, for them to leave together. Will knew. He had always known. Hannibal had been sure he would accept him. He had been so sure Will was going to go with him. They would have been beautiful, becoming something so much more together. Instead he was sat here listening to the constant rain on the window, it echoed around the empty room like a drum beat."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Hannibal had sat on the edge of the bed staring at the floor, willing the pieces of his broken heart to come together again, Will to come back, for them to leave together. Will knew. He had always known. Hannibal had been sure he would accept him. He had been so sure Will was going to go with him. They would have been beautiful, becoming something so much more together. Instead he was sat here listening to the constant rain on the window, it echoed around the empty room like a drum beat.

Somewhere in the back of his mind Hannibal knew he should move, stand up and gather what he needed and go. The hope that Will would eventually join him was the only thing that made his body stand up and walk.

He had flown to Italy first in a strange act of self-harm. Every time he spoke Italian he hoped somehow the words would travel across the ocean and conjure his caro to him. Every word he spoke was filled with an obscene, painful stab of hope. Loneliness was never something that had bothered him before, he always felt whole and complete by himself. Now he felt cleaved in half, he felt so incomplete he was constantly surprised his limbs were still attached to his body and hadn't slipped off in the night, bloody and rotten.

He would often feel as if Will was next to him as he walked the streets of his youth, standing just behind his shoulder waiting for him to turn around. He would close his eyes and feel Will's presence, imagining his scent, imagining his smile, his laugh and his eyes. Soon it felt like Will was with him all the time wherever he went just out of reach, on the periphery.

The feeling intensified the more he focused on it. Hannibal would know when Will was crying, laughing or just being. It felt like they were walking in and out of each other's mind

with too much ease. He felt like he could reach out and touch him sometimes, taste his tears just as Will had done to him before he left.

Eventually he had to leave Italy, he couldn't speak the language anymore. It had started to feel barbed in his mouth, opening up his gums and the side of his mouth, the metallic taste of blood on his tongue. He chased the sun hoping it would burn away his sin, fill this aching gap within him with a new fire, maybe one that would just consume him altogether. He would walk the streets of Havana, lost in a sea of people, voices and noise he wanted it to crush him.

He had found a house away from the main city, down a quiet road, access to a private beach, everything was white and clean, he would open all the doors and windows, the sea breeze blowing through the house.

He would still feel Will walking beside him, these days he seemed more at peace and Hannibal thought it must have something to do with the baby being born. It had been about the right amount of time he was sure. Hannibal could imagine Will holding that child to his chest, hoping it would heal him of his darkness. His thoughts would wander to Alana and Margot, hoping Jack had let it go now, they deserved peace. He felt a small pang of regret about Alana but it passed soon enough, she would be focused on other things now.

The connection to Will became stronger and he started seeing him standing right in front of him, awkward smile not quite reaching his lips. The first time it happened it felt like a dream like he wasn't really there, a hallucination born of pure need. Then he would see him more often and he would be more solid, Hannibal would smile back and Will would nod solemnly. Both knowing the connection between them couldn't be severed. It was permanent and unchangeable.

Hannibal would walk along the beach and Will would be there matching him stride for stride. They wouldn't speak at first, no need for words between them just the salt from the sea on the air and fading sunlight, waves crashing covering their bare feet. He would come back and sit on his porch drinking neat rum from a tumbler, Will would be sat next to him drinking whiskey. Hannibal would share in the peace Will was feeling at these times, a gentle, quiet peace that made his heart ache. He wanted to hold Will's hand to feel its weight in his once more, he wanted to dance with him again, he wanted to kiss him, feel his body next to his and hear his voice, his moans.

Then they had started speaking, small words and exchanges that felt like messages across universes, as if they sent a part of their collective soul to each other with every thought. Hannibal heard a lullaby the first time, Will's soft voice across the breeze singing to him from so far away. The tears streamed down his face as he could see Will stood with the baby against his chest looking out at the night sky, cold and stark, trying to hold all the pieces of himself together and failing, one floated off across the waters to Hannibal on the tune of an old lullaby. Hannibal whispered back, breaking off a part of himself to send back with the words, *I'll wait for you*, etched across it.

Will would wake up in the middle of night, words on his lips and in his mind. He would wake up crying feeling as if Hannibal had just been walking around in his head, he felt too hot and as if he had a memory of sea air and waves crashing. Eventually he started to remember the dreams and the conversations they would have. They would wander into each other's minds more and more often, Will found he was sleeping more, daydreaming more, he was walking through his days in a trance somewhere between worlds.

It had taken him a year to utter the words and remember he had, they had been growing in his mind like a thorny rose from the moment Hannibal had left. He uttered them in Italian *ti amo ancora*. He had felt the crack they made in Hannibal the moment he spoke them. They had wanted to stop crying then, no more tears, they both had to stop.

Will felt healed for a while he would dream of summer sun warming his skin and the taste of rum on his lips.

Will you ever come to me? Hannibal's voice was filled with a remembered pleading that made Will ache.

I am, I am here now with you. Will wished it was true, he wished he could go back, he could almost feel that moment of their past just within reach if he could only find his way back to it, find the bubble and burst through.

Hannibal's eyes were closed, his lips parted, remembering. *Ti voglio qui, con me, voglio ancora assaporare le tue labbra e toccare la tua pelle, voglio vedere il tuo sorriso e sentire la tua risata, la tua voce, i tuoi sospiri.*

You were always very good at this. The humour left a bitter aftertaste in Will's mouth.

Hannibal's smile didn't reach his eyes. *You were always very inspiring.*

A silence stretched out between them, Hannibal tasted bitter whiskey and Will tasted sweet, dark rum.

Will could feel tears, once again forming behind his eyes, he wished they would just go into the sea wherever Hannibal was and be done with it. *Whose dream is this Hannibal?*

Mine. Yours. Ours. Hannibal felt the connection between them so fine but so forever strong, like a thin, silver wire stretched across an impossible distance.

That doesn't help me. Will couldn't untangle his thoughts from Hannibal's anymore, did it even matter whose dream this was, they were the same, conjoined.

Vieni da me, caro. That raw need again, it scraped against Will's skin like Hannibal's nails used to down his back. He shivered.

Tesoro, I won't. He couldn't find his way anymore, the path was lost.

Will felt like he was breaking, as if parts of him were just falling off like dust, and eventually he would just disappear into nothing, be swept away on a sea breeze.

Margot woke up and stretched out her limbs, Alana was with Henry she could hear his soft gurgling laughter and the sweet sing-song of her voice. She smiled and opened her eyes to the late morning sunshine, she couldn't remember the last time she slept in. It had been almost three years since Hannibal left and they had fallen in to a routine with Will being a constant part of their lives. It was strange for Margot to wake up in this house, of all places, with a family, a family that loved each other. She had worried that she wouldn't be able to do this, become this person but she found her skin fit her more comfortably than it ever had before. She had found a groove in her life. Alana was her perfect partner and wonderful mother, Will was her friend, her first honest to god friend she had ever had.

She would look at Will sometimes and see his pain still raw behind his eyes. He seemed better when he was with them, he would play with Henry and his heart would seem light and whole, but his eyes still seemed tinged with darkness. He mentioned Hannibal much less, this worried her more than comforted her. She worried he had two lives and he would have to choose one eventually, she worried it wouldn't be theirs. Alana told her not to worry, he was doing better, but Margot trusted her own experience of pain and darkness.

She sighed and got of bed, she pulled on a robe and socks and made her way to the kitchen. She stood by the door and watched for a moment as Alana and Henry interacted, Alana was trying to get him to eat and he just wanted to play with Winston who was lurking under the table hoping for scraps.

"Morning loves." Margot said and Alana looked up smiling, Winston looked torn for a moment and then made his way to Margot and nuzzled at her hand. "Morning Winston. Where is Will?"

"Your son is not eating." Alana joked, he was always Margot's when he was being troublesome, Henry giggled.

Margot made her way over to them both kissing the top of Henry's head and then Alana on the lips. "He just gets easily distracted. Where is Will?"

"He had to go a crime scene in Virginia, he should be back tonight. He dropped the pack off early this morning. I told him to come back to here if he needs to."

Margot saw the rest of dogs milling about the garden through the open French windows and sighed, "Good, I hope he does. I hope Jack isn't working him too hard. He has only just been cleared to go back."

"I know I've tried to talk to Jack but he won't listen, the strings he pulled to get Will back out in the field he wants his money's worth."

Margot snorted "well I am not sure he should ever have agreed, but I told him that."

“You know Will, he wants to help.”

“Hmmm, I worry about him being alone.”

“We can’t keep him here all the time as much as we would like to.” Alana said and Margot laughed, it was easier when Will was here he spent the entire time playing with Henry who loved him. “There’s fresh coffee.”

“Thanks.” Margot went to get herself some coffee and Winston made his way back to Henry who whooped with glee at the very sight of the fluffy tail and they both laughed.

Will came back late that night but Margot was up settling Henry down who seemed to be waking up at 1 am every morning without fail. She had slept in so it was her turn. She had shut the door gently, stopping to pet Winston who was in his bed outside Henry’s room. Walking into the lounge she saw him sat down in one of the chairs, whiskey in hand, eyes closed, mouth moving, whispering.

“Will?” Margot sat down next to him.

He startled and opened his eyes, “hey, sorry did I wake you?”

“No, Henry was up I just got him to sleep again. Are you okay?”

Will looked wistful and sipped his whiskey, “yeah fine.”

“How was work?”

Will grimaced “the usual.”

Margot stood up and got herself a glass and poured herself some whiskey and then sat down next to Will. “Will, you know you can talk to me?”

Will smiled and looked at her, “I know.”

“What were you doing before I came in?”

Will looked pained for a moment, his eyes brimmed with tears and Margot just waited, he looked away biting his lower lip as he stared out of the window. “Sometimes it’s like he’s here or I’m there.”

“You know where he is?”

“Somewhere warm, by the sea, somewhere with rum.” Will’s voice was quiet and faraway, he could still taste rum instead of the whisky he was drinking. He could almost still hear the waves, an occasional bird cry, he shivered.

Margot knew he was still not fully back with her, his eyes looked wistful, tears still glistening, one fell down his cheek and he didn’t do anything to stop it. She reached out a hand to his, he smiled and looked down at it. Her voice soft and lulling “you should let him go, you know that.”

“I can’t though.” Will’s answer seemed to pain him, every word fell from his lips with such palpable regret it almost made Margot wince.

“You could, though, if you wanted to.” There was a pause between them as she allowed these words to settle. “You can’t keep doing this to yourself Will.”

Will didn’t respond straight away he continued to stare at Margot’s hand over his. Eventually he spoke his voice a little stronger “I don’t know how to stop. I can’t leave, I can’t stay.”

“You could leave if you wanted to,” Margot removed her hand, sat back in her chair and sipped her drink “you know you could.”

“Jack would look for me, for us.” Will sipped his whiskey finally tasting it, washing the imagined sweet aftertaste of rum from his mouth.

“He wouldn’t find you. He hasn’t found Hannibal yet.”

“He is still looking, he would always be looking. I would be forever looking over my shoulder.” Will thought about leaving every second of every day like a thread he couldn’t help but keep pulling. Every time he found himself walking down a beach, sitting on a porch that wasn’t his own, which was more and more frequent these days.

“You are doing that now anyway.”

Will hadn’t thought about it that way, he was looking at what could have been, at what could be. He spent his days thinking about a man, a man who he wished he could go to, who he wished would just appear again from nowhere and ask him again. He didn’t know if his answer would be the same if Hannibal was standing in front of him speaking the words, again. Will sighed at the realisation “I suppose.”

“You need to make a decision or be at peace with the one you made.” He was never with them he was always daydreaming, she could see he was barely with her now.

“You make it sound easy.” Will was aware that she knew it wasn’t, he said it anyway, a small barb he couldn’t help but fling at her hard won insight of him. She always saw through him, her pain had given her a direct line to his, a shared understanding of hurts that he wished neither of them had.

She smiled at his attempt to get under her skin, did he not know her by now it took a lot more than that. “No it’s not easy, I know that. I just want you to be happy Will.” She did, she wanted nothing but to see that easy smile on his face that she hadn’t seen for so long.

“I’m not sure I’ve ever known how to be happy.” He wasn’t sure he had, he had always tortured himself somehow, any moment of happiness he was instantly suspicious of. Perhaps that was why he had said no to Hannibal, it wasn’t his moral code but his complete inability to be happy. Happiness an alien a concept to him as love. Or so he had thought.

“That’s not true, though is it? You did with him, you were happy.” Margot had seen it, she had felt it.

Will's closed his eyes and allowed himself to relive the memories, the touches, the moments of laughter and conversation between them. He had been happy, he had been as close to happiness in those months as he had ever been. There had been darkness yes but also acceptance of his own nature as well as Hannibal's. He suddenly felt the stab of betrayal from Hannibal's perspective. "I betrayed him though, I betrayed that happiness."

Margot sighed "because you knew what he was and loved him anyway?"

"When he told me, when I made him tell me under the promise of forgiveness which I gave but then I took back when I didn't go with him. He left, I pushed him away."

"That's not betrayal Will, that's just fear."

Will looked at Margot someone so intimately acquainted with fear that she had absorbed it into her, she lived in the home of her torment. She walked the halls of her past not with bitterness but with love. Her revenge the ultimate slap in the face of her tormentors, her own happiness and contentment.

"I will say it again Margot, I am not as strong as you are."

"I will say it again Will, you are. We are the same you and I. You just need to make the decision and live with it."

"You don't regret it." Will said this as statement rather than a question, Margot only looked forward, she had not regrets, her gaze was fixed on her hard won happiness which she would hold on to with more ferocity than her small frame belied.

"Never. I made the decision. I would make it again."

Will smiled and sipped his whiskey and they both looked out at the stars in the darkness. Will thought of white sand beaches under a moonlit sky and Margot thought of her family tree sprouting new and green under a sun that was warm and healing, of knives dissolving deep in the earth.

Will was standing in his front garden pale moonlight sparkling on the snow in front of him, the warm light from his house stretched out behind him, his dogs sniffing amongst the trees. The night was so still and quiet, his breath a frosted cloud, he shivered from the cold, it smelt like more snow. He looked up at the stars bright in the sky. Hannibal appeared next to him like smoke, Will closed his eyes and imagined he could smell the warm sea air instead of cold expectant snow.

Mi hai perdonato. His voice was quiet tonight, wistful almost. Will realised he had never heard Hannibal be wistful before and he wondered how much rum he had drunk and then he remembered the half-drunk bottle of whisky inside. This might just be his dream this time.

Lo so. The thought of his forgiveness had been haunting him ever since he spoke to Margot. The words had left his mouth in passion and he wondered now in the cold hard night whether he had meant them at all. He searched inside of himself to see if that forgiveness was still there, he didn't know.

But you won't come. Hannibal sounded more like himself now, surety laced with anger and a tinge of regret, desperation echoed through his words harkening back to that night and his plea.

No. It was a reflex more than a considered response. *How long will you wait for me?*

Finché dovrò. Ti amo ancora.

As if it was ever in doubt, *I know.* Will closed his eyes and breathed a long sigh out and imagined his breath dissolving this mirage of Hannibal into the air.

Bev has lunch with Will most days, she feels like she needs to keep an eye on him which he hates but she can't help. She walks to his classroom and waits for his lecture to end, for the students to file out all looking slightly lovelorn and she smiles to herself. She walks in once they have all left to find Will tidying away his papers into his briefcase.

"Hey" she says with as little concern as she can muster these days, he still looks like he's fading to her, slowly but steadily fading.

He turns to look at her and for a moment he looks as if he has entirely forgotten who she is, it's a fleeting look one he is getting more and more these days, as if he is a stranger in his own life. Bev thinks about the science of heartbreak how it can change the structure of the brain, the synapses firing differently. She imagines the electricity in Will's brain as stuttering and cold, it makes her frown. She recovers quickly though and smiles.

"Hi Bev, sorry I seem to be a million miles away today." Will puts the last of his papers in his case and clicks the briefcase shut. Bev notices he is still wearing the leather bracelet Hannibal gave him.

"When are you not?" She says, only half joking.

"Fair point. How's it going?"

"The case?" She asks and Will nods, "slow, painfully so."

Will smiles sympathetically, Jack had been in earlier in the day but he had nothing new since he went to Virginia, nothing had changed. His empathy felt old on him now, like a worn out sweater and he was finding it harder to care, it was becoming easier to look into the abyss.

"Sorry I couldn't be more help."

“You were as much help as always Will, don’t worry we’ll catch him and I’m sure your theory will be proved correct. Science is just a painstaking process.”

Will laughed and the sound still felt false to her, “you will get there, you always do.”

“Nice to know someone has faith in us.”

“Always.”

It was then she saw it on his desk she had hoped that he wouldn’t see it. “Oh.”

Will looked confused then he realised what she was looking at. “Yeah.”

“I was hoping you wouldn’t see it.” Bev walked over to the offending journal and picked it up gingerly as if she didn’t want to touch it all.

“Yeah well Jack thought I might find it educational, perhaps give me some new insights.” Will took off his glasses and cleaned them with his tie unnecessarily.

“I know he’s my boss but seriously he can be such a dick sometimes.” Will laughed at that and nodded in agreement. “So did you get any new insights?”

“Other than the fact that Chilton is a hack, no, but we already knew that I just perhaps underestimated even his ability for crassness.”

“It doesn’t mention you by name.”

“All but though. He describes me, my job, everything. Makes me sound like a lovesick, groomed puppy.”

“He has a way with words for certain. I can’t believe he’s making money from this though.” Will looked at her incredulously, “okay I can but still.”

“No use worrying about it, what’s done is done.”

“You could write a rebuttal.”

“Yeah I don’t think that would go down well with the FBI.”

“Under a pseudonym then.” The fact that Will wasn’t angry about this made her sad, the old Will would have been, pre-heartbreak Will would have found a way to tear this article down.

“What would be the point? I hear he has a book coming out.”

“No? How is that possible? He barely knew Hannibal or the case!”

“He thinks himself an expert therefore he is, it’s a magic trick really.”

“He’s a parasite.”

“He is. Let’s go get lunch and think no more of him, he doesn’t deserve it.”

Bedelia sighed before she opened the door, preparing herself for Will Graham. She always had to get herself in the right headspace to talk to him. He was her only patient now as Hannibal had been before him. She wrote and lectured mostly these days, she had written about Hannibal but not using his name or Will's. She was aware of Chilton's book and it left a sour taste in her mouth, Hannibal would have found it crass and she would have to agree. She had not seen Will since the article and book announcement had been made, she was sure he would have seen it.

Bracing herself she opened the door. "Come in."

She poured them both a glass of wine as had become their habit. It was perhaps not that surprising that Will had taken Hannibal's place in her life so comfortably.

"I assume you have seen it." Will smiled a strained grin.

"Yes, indeed I have."

"What did you think?"

She laughed "Doctor Chilton, and I use the term Doctor loosely, is a hack Will you should pay no attention to him. His knowledge of Hannibal is surface at best and his knowledge of you even less so."

"I am glad you don't agree with his assessment of me at least."

Bedelia smiled "no I do not think of you as quite so, shall we say, pathetic."

Will scoffed "yeah that's the word that haunted me too." Will took a large gulp of his wine and Bedelia watched him with interest.

"It affected you though? To be thought of as easily influenced, that he had some kind of hold over you, that you were not always entirely aware or responsible for your actions when you were with him. That he may have pulled the wool so effectively over your eyes. Surely it benefits you to be thought of as lovesick and blind rather than calculated and aware of the monster in your bed."

Will looked at her, he was pretty sure that was the first time in all the years he had been coming here that she had explicitly referenced their sexual relationship. He was surprised and a little amused. "If you put it like that then yes I suppose so. Being aware would cause a problem for Jack and for me to work, in fact if I was aware I may have been charged as an accomplice or with obstruction of justice. So yeah maybe it is better to be thought of as lovesick puppy."

Bedelia smiled and raised her glass to that. "Let us not linger on that hack. How are you? How is being back in the field?"

Will sighed “it feels like I am often not really there even more so than before, that even when I am imagining all these acts and the kind of people who commit them I am still so disconnected from it more than I have ever been before. On the plus side my nightmares bother me less.”

“You still have them?”

“I suppose.” He mostly dreamt about Hannibal or about loss, a deep, aching chasm of loss. Nightmare was one word for it. “Mostly they seem like a habit my brain can’t get out of.”

“Your grief is a habit in some ways, it’s a very hard one to break.”

“Because I don’t want to. That’s what Margot thinks, she thinks if I don’t let him go then I should just go to him and be done with it.”

“You feel as if you are lingering between lives, the decision made and the possibility of the alternative?”

Will thought about it and knew the answer was yes but saying it out loud would feel like a crack that he might not be able to stop. He nodded and there was silence for moments between them and when Will spoke again he couldn’t meet her eyes “I feel as if I am not here anyway, I thought that feeling would lessen with time, it’s been years, three years and I feel as if I am fading more and more each day. I see how everyone looks at me as if I will one day just disintegrate in front of their eyes.”

“You need to not only let him go but you need to let go of the part that went with him, and, most importantly, you need to want to let them go.”

“I am not sure I ever will.”

“Then what is the alternative?”

Will sipped his wine and once again tasted rum laced with lime and smiled.

Margot walked into Will’s house it felt different. The dogs were waiting for her in the lounge. He had called her and left a message in the night and her heart had soared and sunk at the same time. She had driven over as soon as she could. She let the dogs out in to the front yard and then went back inside.

“Will?”

Nothing but emptiness. She looked around nothing had moved, everything was still in its place. She walked to the back room where he had started sleeping again, the bed was made and cold. She went upstairs to the bed she had found for Will which was still there unused, dust in the air of the room. She went downstairs and went in to the kitchen. Two large envelopes on the counter. She took a deep breath and opened the larger of the two, it held all the instructions for the dogs. She sighed feeling a well of tears brimming in her eyes at the sight of it. The deeds to the house were also there. A note for Jack, Bev and Alana.

She opened the other envelope with her name on it, a small card with a horse on the front she opened it.

I made a decision. No regrets. Thank you.

She smiled as the tears streamed down her face.

Alana drove into work a few days after Margot had found the note. Letting the weekend pass so he had time to get far away. She walked into Jack's office with an odd smile on her face and an envelope in her hand with Jack's name on it. She handed it to him wordlessly leaving him to open it. She made her way to the lab to give Bev her note. They hugged when she read it, let tears fall through smiles and wished Will a new life away from all of this pain.

Jack hung his head and wished he had never met Hannibal Lecter.

Hannibal swims in the ocean every day, fighting against the waves makes him feel strong, he can't imagine swimming anywhere else now. The water here is the perfect temperature even in the cooler months it's still invigorating. Every stroke cutting a slice through the water, propelling himself further and further out into the sea. Eventually he wakes from his trance and turns back the power of the current behind him, carrying him back to himself.

He always goes early, just as the sun is rising so that by the time he makes it back to the shore the sun's heat is just beginning to burn through the air. The sand is getting hot under foot close to burning the skin, an almost sizzle of salt water he finds strangely pleasing. He walks up the beach to his home, rinsing his feet before he goes in and grabbing the towel he leaves on the porch, most of the water has evaporated from his skin by the time he reaches the porch just the slight sting of salt remains.

He walks to the shower and allows the cool water to wash away the salt, sand and burn of the sun. Letting the water fall over his body, he spends longer in the shower than he ever used to, time has become much less important to him here. He rarely remembers to wear a watch. He has one clock in his small house, it's a small mantle clock that was on the bookcase when he bought the place. He doesn't mind it ticking away in the background, he remembers he used

to find the sound reassuring. He placed the antique drawing set which Will had given him next to it, his fingers often idly brushing the wood as he walks by.

He leaves the shower, dries himself off only partially, he likes to feel the water leave his skin in the heat, his hair has gotten longer, partly as a disguise, partly because he does not care as much as he used to about his appearance. He looks at it and thinks maybe he has let it grow too far now, he can almost tie it back. He is still clean shaven, he can't abide a beard in this heat and thinks of it as too much of a cliché for a man on the run. Once he is dry enough he dresses in loose linens, too hot for anything else.

He squeezes orange juice straight from the orange, the smell of citrus permeates the air. He makes Cuban coffee and eats fresh fruit on his porch, watching the sun as it rises higher in the sky. He thinks about his day and what he might do, he realises his days are all merging into one and that he should probably think about taking on more work. He has been doing small translations for the local university under an assumed name, covering his tracks doing it all by email. He writes papers too under a pseudonym and publishes them in horological journals and wonders idly if anyone checks to see if they seem like they are the same as his old ones. He doubts it. He can't face fixing clocks or watches anymore, not just because he knows Jack would be on the look-out for it, but to help the passing of time along is something he just can't seem to find interest in any more. He resents its steady, persistent passing, he longs for it to stop again.

When he finishes his breakfast he reads for a short time, he is reading old classics in their original language, he is currently on *The Odyssey* and he imagines Will as Odysseus trying to find his way back to him. He finds his romanticism somewhat depressing but nevertheless he can't let go of the image. He can't feel Will today which irks him a little, he dreamt of him last night but he seemed far away and that worried him. He tries to push the thought from his mind.

He goes inside as the sun gets warmer, he needs to send and check his translation he did last night one last time so he takes out his computer and sits at the kitchen table. He gets absorbed in the language, he always found words comforting, trying to find the right words to convey meaning is an art he appreciates and enjoys. He knows he is always trying to find the right words somehow, as if somewhere in all these different languages is the key to Will's return. He just needs to use the right combination just as he used to when Will would break apart under his language, words pressing against skin.

He sighs and stretches out his limbs. He can hear the waves and the gulls in the air. He can't hear the clock. He looks over at the bookshelf, his eyes narrow and his heart stops. He gets up and goes to it, holding his ear to it, nothing.

"Caro?" his voice holds so much untold hope it sounds broken.

"Si Tesoro."

Ti amo ancora – I still love you

Ti voglio qui, con me, voglio ancora assaporare le tue labbra e toccare la tua pelle, voglio vedere il tuo sorriso e sentire la tua risata, la tua voce, i tuoi sospiri. - I want you here, with me, I want to taste your lips again and feel your skin, I want to see your smile and hear your laugh, your voice, your moans.

Vieni da me, caro. – Come to me caro.

Mi hai perdonato. – You forgave me.

Lo so. - I know

Finché dovrò. Ti amo ancora. – As long as I have to. I still love you

Thank you to the lovely @he-s-dead-jim who translated this final part for me! Thank you to @alackofanythingtosay for all her hard work on this also its been hugely appreciated.

Epilogue

Chapter Summary

Cheeky epilogue for you!

Epilogue

Will is sat on the porch in his usual chair, reading trashy crime novels that Hannibal disapproves of, he is drinking rum laced with lime as the breeze gently brushes against his skin. He can't get used to the heat and the fact that his bones ache less here. He pays little attention to the words on the page. He can hear the comforting sounds of Hannibal in the kitchen, different aromas waft out to him mixing in with the sea air. Waves crash on the beach as the sun is going down, large and pink in the sky. He can hear birds in the distance. He smiles, easy and unconscious.

Hannibal appears a few moments later with the bottle of their favourite rum and more ice. He refills Will's glass and then his own, adding another ice cube. He takes the seat next to Will and rolls his eyes at the book Will is reading.

"Maybe you should think about writing one of those infernal novels, at least that way they would be accurate."

Will dog ears the corner of the book making Hannibal wince even though he views it as rubbish, it is still a book and should be treated with more respect. Will chucks it on the floor just to annoy him and Hannibal attempts to not show his distain with this action.

"Are you trying to imply that my boat fixing business doesn't bring in enough, that I'm not pulling my weight?"

Hannibal laughs at the word business. Will spends his days tinkering on boat motors by the docks, he gets up late and meanders down there and fixes engines for people in exchange for small amounts of cash or more usually random gifts of fresh fish, fruit and, the most favoured by Will, trashy American crime novels he relishes. "I think perhaps 'business' is stretching the definition of what you do rather far. No I am not implying that, you know we are comfortable and to provide for you brings me untold joy. I love to indulge you."

Will raises his eyebrow at that "I'll hold you to that."

"I have no doubt in my mind, caro, that you will. Seriously though if you did want to I could get them published for you, no one would connect them to you."

Will looked out to the waves and sipped his drink “maybe.”

There are times when Hannibal can barely believe that the sight of Will sitting here drinking rum is no longer a mirage, a shared dream or hallucination and that he is actually here with him. It takes his breath away.

It had been a year to the day that the clock on the bookshelf had stopped and Will had appeared at his door smiling and crying with relief at seeing him. They had kissed and swallowed each other tears and moans.

Silence happily settled between them, Hannibal was watching Will. “It’s been year.” Hannibal spoke softly and watched as Will looked surprised and turned to look at Hannibal. “You never were very good at keeping track of the time.”

Will laughed “no I suppose not, it tends to stop around me anyway. That’s what it feels like here with you, as if time has stopped for just us.”

Hannibal smiled and leant across to kiss him, Will took Hannibal’s drink from his hand and placed both of them on the table. Will then crawled across the chairs and sat in Hannibal’s lap who laughed at the less than elegant way in which Will did this. Will shut him up with a kiss.

“Carry me to bed Tesoro.”

“It would be my pleasure caro.”

End Notes

Any feedback is so lovingly adored. Never done an AU before! Never done a long fic like this before. Thanks for staying with me.

(The watch stopping thing happens to me. No clock keep time around me. I also interfere with electronics. Ironically has trouble uploading this fic...)

Xxx

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!